



# Youth Monitoring Report for Turkey, 2009 - 2012

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## I. Introduction: The Scope and the Method

Youth Studies Unit<sup>1</sup> (YSU) under Istanbul Bilgi University's Center for Civil Society Studies (CCSS)<sup>2</sup> continues its efforts to encourage the implementation of knowledge-based youth policies in Turkey through papers, reports, and books it publishes. "Youth Monitoring Report for Turkey, 2009-2012" is produced to follow-up and complement the previous publications of the Unit titled Monitoring Report (Kurtaran Y., 2009) and Youth Studies and Policies in Turkey (Yentürk N., Nemutlu G., Kurtaran Y., 2012). It is a follow-up as some of the evaluations in the previous publications has to be updated due to recent developments. This study on the one hand updates certain data, while (re)analyzes the situation emerging as a consequence of this updating on the other. As we mentioned before, the report also complements previous studies. In as much as, it has been possible to access and evaluate some of the data which were missing in the previous studies. As a result, some of the issues, which could not be brought forward before, could also be discussed. The study is based mostly on desk-top research. As a result, using publicly available data, the report both aggregates this data and analyzes it.

In recent times, important studies on the profile of the youth in Turkey has been made available to those that are concerned.<sup>3</sup> Youth study, presented to the public in 2008 and used as the basis of the Turkey country report of the UNDP Human Development Report -on the theme of youth-, is one of the most comprehensive studies among those publications. Though after four years the validity of the data set on certain issues provided in this report can be questionable, it still can be useful for historical comparisons. Field study conducted by the Foundation For Political, Economic, and Social Research (SETA) as one of the studies of the Ministry of Youth and Sports (MYS) presents relatively more updated data.<sup>4</sup> Similarly, especially because it aggregates updated data, youth statistics published by Turkish Statistics Institute (TUIK) every year in May (TUIK, 2011 ve 2012) also provides important clues for understanding the situation of youth with respect to various macro indicators like unemployment, education, internet usage. When evaluating the findings on youth provided by those studies, it will be more appropriate to take into account that they cannot be independent of time and space.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [genclik.bilgi.edu.tr/](http://genclik.bilgi.edu.tr/)

<sup>2</sup> <http://stcm.bilgi.edu.tr> . I would like to thank Nurhan Yenturk, Laden Yurttagüler, and Devin Bahçeci from that Center for their contributions to this paper.

<sup>3</sup> Studies published by institutions such as UNDP, SETA, BETAM, and KONDA are some examples.

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.gsb.gov.tr/content/files/turkiyenin\\_genclik\\_profil\\_i\\_web.pdf](http://www.gsb.gov.tr/content/files/turkiyenin_genclik_profil_i_web.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> The research study of the MYS titled Youth and Social Media based on a field survey conducted in July 2013 only covers the issue of the social media.

Though this report mostly includes desk-top research, it will also use the findings of “Youth Participation in Turkey” (KONDA, 2014) survey, which, as a part of the Network project, was carried out by KONDA Research and Consultancy in 4-5 May 2013 and published as a book. 2.508 young individuals between ages 18-24 in Turkey participated to this field survey. Since, apart from the studies related to youth and focusing on consumption habits in Turkey, no other study that is similar to this one and based on such a large sample has been conducted, this report is also the only research study that can be used for the purposes of this paper.<sup>6</sup> In addition to this study, we will also use the data provided by TUIK as an important source of data on issues related to official statistics.

In Turkey, representative studies which are especially important for observing the general needs of the majority or, in other words, of a statistically significant group of people are being carried out, though limited in number. This approach favoring the majority sometimes provides us important clues on general tendencies and findings. Yet, there are also young people and youth groups which are not statistically significant, but have different needs. In a country like Turkey where differences based on ethnic identity, religion, sexual orientation, and class can create striking differences among young people, it is possible to argue that field studies which do not touch those issues will always have some missing parts that needs to be developed for a meaningful analysis of the youth. However, in recent times we have also witnessed an increase in the number of studies<sup>7</sup> and compilations<sup>8</sup> on those sub-groups of young people who are represented in the breakdown of general data. Moreover, here we have to mention also a study titled Bibliography of Graduate Thesis on Youth prepared by MYS and the Journal on Youth Research published twice every year.<sup>9</sup>

Also the books that have been used in this report and published as a part of the Network project that includes research studies discussing political participation of youth, youth policies, youth studies and perceptions on youth, as well as translations of some of Council of Europe publications has contributed to the narrowing of this knowledge gap and has also contributed to this study.

Finally, the report also refers to some other sources focusing on Europe but also partially covering the development of youth policies at the global level. As a result of the cooperation that has been in effect since 1998 between European Union (EU) and the Council of Europe, which are two important institutions making institutional

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<sup>6</sup> Given the increasing level of youth activism observed after the field study we use here, there will be a need for additional field studies that take into account that development which occurred in 2013. This issue will be included in our next report covering also the year 2013 which will be published later.

<sup>7</sup> For an example of those studies see Lüküslü and Çelik, 2008

<sup>8</sup> For an example of those studies see Lüküslü and Yücel, 2013.

<sup>9</sup> This is a peer-reviewed journal which has been published since 2013 in both printed and online forms. For detailed information see <http://genclikarastirmalari.gsb.gov.tr>

investment to youth issues, a large literature on youth issues has been generated. The European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy (EKCYP) established due to this cooperation prioritizes the development and popularization of researches, policies, and practices related to the youth throughout Europe. Europe EYPIC Network established for that purpose prepares country reports prepared by a legal representative for each European country on issues like youth participation, voluntary work, and understanding youth and publishes them. On the other hand, another initiative that was founded in 2011 as a result of the same cooperation is the Pool of European Youth Researchers (PEYR). Within this initiative, youth researchers again through country representation works for the objectives of increasing the number of scientific studies on youth issues and making them widespread, as well as ensuring knowledge flow. Representatives from Turkey have been working in both institutions since the beginning. Those institutions also provide limited information on youth in Turkey.

In addition to their joint work, there are also official documents on youth produced separately by both EU and the Council of Europe of which Turkey is also a member. White Paper on Youth (European Commission, 2001), European Youth Pact (European Commission, 2009), and European Youth Strategy (European Commission, 2009) are probably the most important building blocks of youth policies within EU. Similarly, Warsaw Summit in 2005 (Council of Europe, 2005) and the meeting of ministers responsible of youth issues for the Youth Policy of The Council of Europe: Agenda 2020 (Council of Europe, 2008) should be regarded as other important steps.

Another international source of reference on those issues are the studies carried out by United Nations (UN). Those studies particularly provide statistical data on youth covering also countries outside of Europe. On the other hand, the UN related studies conducted on the basis of the Millennium Development Goals focuses on a narrower framework.

During the preparation for this study, an analysis based on the information compiled from the above mentioned documents, treaties, and research studies was carried out. Additionally, Youth Specialization Commission's report for the Tenth Development Plan (2014-2018)<sup>10</sup> prepared for the Ministry of Development has also been used. Furthermore, the information gathered from open information channels such as the internet web-sites of the above mentioned institutions have also been included. This study which is written by also using the opinions of various experts on youth issues targets to meet the need for the critical recording of developments related to youth issues in Turkey that took place in recent times.

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<sup>10</sup> Yörük Kurtaran, who has also written this study has taken part as the reporter of that Report.

We must stress that when a research study focuses on an analysis of a particular policy, evaluating this policy according to certain reference points becomes critical. As it should be the case for any kind of public policy analysis, without digressing academic neutrality, this study on youth policies also takes the whole values supporting the youth to become equal and free citizens as its essential reference points.<sup>11</sup> This approach also forming the backbone of the policy formulation approach of the European Youth Forum, which is established by the European Council to which Turkey is also a member of and the umbrella youth organizations in Europe, concentrates on whether a policy aims to transform young people into more equal and free citizens or not. In that regard, the objective of this study is to evaluate the youth policies implemented between 2009 and 2012 within that context and to contribute through relevant proposals to the discussions for enhancing the welfare and the participation of young people in the widest sense. Therefore, together with the monitoring reports of the Youth Studies Unit, this study also hopes to bring long term developments to the attention of the those concerned.

Especially in recent days, a serious leap has been witnessed in Turkey in the area of youth and youth policies. One of the consequences this change has created in policy dimension is the transformation of the General Directorate of Youth and Sports to Ministry of Youth and Sports. As a natural result witnessed in the policy dimension, this process marked the end of the period during which “nonexistence of youth policies had been the policy itself”.<sup>12</sup>

Of course we have to recall that, before MYS was established, there had been several attempts for the formulation of policies concerning the youth in different levels during the last 20 years. Moreover, even the consequences of the relation between youth, education, and military service, which had been apparent beginning from late 19<sup>th</sup> century during the period of nation building and late capitalist transformation as well as during the period of the Republic, had contained in itself a core for youth policies. However, in the beginning of 2000s, a wide gap could be apparently observed when the practices in Turkey were compared with the youth policies implemented by international institutions like the European Council, European Union, or United Nations -in which Turkey holds memberships- or by countries in Continental Europe on local and national levels. This gap was a congenital result of the change regarding the perceptions on young people which had been one of the primary indicators of the

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<sup>11</sup> For studies discussing those reference points in detail, see Yentürk, Kurtaran and Nemutlu, 2012 as well as the studies of the EU and the Council of Europe mentioned in the text. Also see one of the studies published by the Council of Europe and translated to Turkish during the Network project, Denstad, 2009; Kurtaran and Yurttagüler, 2014 , and Gür and Bahçeci, 2014.

<sup>12</sup> This argument has formed the basis of the book titled “Youth Studies and Policies in Turkey” which analysis the youth policies in Turkey and was published in 2008 and 2012. See, Yentürk, Kurtaran, and Nemutlu, 2012.

nationalist project aiming to tame the whole society.<sup>13</sup> The demand for youth policies by many youth CSOs and people working on youth issues as a response to the conditions emerged due to this congenital result should also be viewed as a non-contradictory step. However, acknowledging that there are some points which possibly needs to be developed, the establishment of the Ministry, the formulation of the National Youth and Sports Policy Document which is to be analyzed in detail in this study, and the apparent increase in the services provided by the Ministry for youth and youth organizations are evidences demonstrating that a political approach has been emerging.<sup>14</sup> In that regard, briefly, the existence of a youth policy in Turkey as of today and from now on is one of the facts forming the basis of this study.

Due the their results which may be summarized as an increase in opportunities for the youth, those developments may lead us to conclude that especially the relation between the social state and the citizens has been improving in the new Turkey. However, this finding can only be regarded as an accomplishment if life is explained primarily and only by quantitative measures and performance analysis. Yet, the requirement for the policies to target more equal and free citizenship of young people in line with the above mentioned essential criteria is as important as the existence of those policies. Hence, today what we need no discuss is the characteristics of the youth policy in Turkey.

Any study aiming to analyze the characteristics of the youth policies implemented in Turkey in recent years should first of all examine the main perceptions about young people, the changing and persistent sides of those perceptions in time, and the developments happening inside and outside of the country during a given period. Therefore, the second part of this study deals with the main perceptions concerning young people. In the third part, by providing main indicators, attention is drawn to required youth policies. The fourth part of the study focuses on both main laws and documents related to youth policies and the institutional practices of youth policies. The analysis in those three parts essentially concentrate on the developments of the period 2009-2012. In cases where data for 2013 is available, they are taken into account. The last part brings forward proposals regarding youth policies.

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<sup>13</sup> For a study which examines this issue by analyzing the discourses of parliamentarians see, Yurttagüler, 2014.

<sup>14</sup> One of the main characteristics of this policy is its parallel approach similar to the one adopted in the area of social policy in Turkey during the last 10 years (Buğra, 2008). While on the one hand improving the access to services for those who had not have the that chance under Turkey's historical social state concept, this approach also limits the access of those that were favored by the traditional approach. This change of approach was naturally have been expected to affect also the youth policies.

## **2. General Perceptions on Young People**

In a qualitative analysis of youth policies, it is possible to discuss the general tendencies that are dominantly reflected in both the society's and the public policies' perceptions on young people. Believing in that young people are homogenous, that they are mostly students, that they do not have different life practices, as well as evaluating young people independent of time and space, making generalizations on young people, and disregarding the historical conditions are among those dominant perceptions and their consequences. They are briefly examined below.<sup>15</sup>

- **The perception that young people are homogeneous**

Limiting the state of being young within a certain age range is an approach that is particularly observed in studies aiming to formulate policies. In fact, youth is an ever changing and refined period and even a category that is shaped as a natural output of different generations and different power relations between generations. A definition of youth that does not take into account those power relations and limits itself with a biological age range creates a natural boundary for understanding young people and making sense of them. Rather than being reduced to an age range, youth should be regarded as a heterogeneous segment with different needs and conditions depending on the social, economic, and political situation. However, this approach of viewing youth as a biological age group is still dominant at the political level.

For example, while for United Nations this implies the age cohort of 15-24, the target groups are set as those aged 15-29 in most of the EU countries where the transition from school to work takes place at higher ages and also in EU's youth-based programs. In Turkey, though the age range defining the youth differs in several studies and documents, generally it is accepted as the age cohort of 12-24. According to the Turkish Civil Code, "adulthood begins at age of 18". Although according to the Regulation on Youth Centers being between ages 12 and 24 is a requirement for membership to youth centers, in case of a request, an applicant can be accepted as a member if he/she is not below 7 or over 26. According to the Turkish Civil Code and the Law on Associations dated 2004, all natural persons who have legal capacity as well as legal persons are entitled the right to become a member of an association and to form one. Moreover, given the consent of their legal representatives, all minors over age 15, who have the power of discernment, can form children associations, can become a member or an administrator of children associations. Furthermore, those that complete age 12 can also become members to organizations under the same conditions.

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<sup>15</sup> For a discussion on the conceptual backgrounds of the dominant perceptions on young people in the literature, see, Yentürk, Kurtaran, and Nemutlu, 2012



At that point, we should remind that this group, defined at the political level as people within a certain age range, is not homogenous. Young people experience different daily life practices due to differences in age, gender, economic well-being, social, family-related, and cultural conditions, education level, place of residence, social class, and other various reasons. In that respect, we should underline that since different young people have different life practices, their needs can also differ. However, we can also talk about some commonalities cross cutting those differences. For instance, despite the differences between young people, demands related to technology and the use of social media appear as common demands.

- **The perception that “young people are students”**

Assuming that all young people are students is a prejudice which is an example of those perceptions regarding young people as a homogenous group of some sort. However, even during the period before 2008 global crisis, only 30 percent of young people in Turkey were continuing their education. According to another recent study, in Turkey 26 percent of young people are categorized as “those staying at home”, while 45 percent of young people continue their education and 28 percent are working in a job (KONDA, 2011). We can access to more detailed information via the survey conducted by KONDA as a part of the Network project. According to that survey, 45 percent of young people are students, 21 percent are working, 19 percent both continue education and work, and 11 percent are neither in education or in employment (KONDA, 2014). Another study calculates the ratio of young people in Turkey who are “neither in education nor in employment” as 25 percent (OECD, 2012). With 52 percent, the situation is much more profound for young women; this rate also demonstrates that transition from school to work is quite limited among young women. The limited number of studies focusing on sub-groups in young people show that understanding the break down in between segments like “house girls”, and in between different ethnic groups or minorities/refugees is also difficult (Lüküslü ve Çelik, 2008). In addition to that, the fact that, among OECD countries, Turkey is the country with the lowest number of high school and university graduates also points out how problematic is the perception which regards all young people as students.

- **The perception that there are no differences between young people’s daily life practices and needs**

Daily life practices are one of the factors which determine the needs of the people. When the approaches of different age groups in the society on various issues are examined, it is observed that the opinions of young people are parallel to other segments of the society. However, there are important differences between what

young people and adults living in the same location and coming from the same social environment experience. For example, when an older person gets out of the house, what he/she wear may not be a concern for other family members. Yet, what a young person wears in school, in the neighborhood, or in the family can be an issue of intervention. In that regard, we must underline an essential finding of the studies carried out in recent years (Yurttagüler, 2014 ve KONDA, 2014). The age parameter may not create important differences in values, perceptions, and expectations. Education level and political preferences are the main factors that create differences between young people.

As discussed above, the fact that young people have different daily life practices compared to other segments of the society also creates a differentiation in their needs. In other words, young people may have needs that are different from those of other groups in the society. This in turn shapes the critical discussion on how youth policies meeting those different needs should be formulated. Since policies related to youth are generally designed in a way to meet the needs of a large majority, they can contradict with the principle of keeping an equal distance to all citizens.

In United Kingdom there is already a developed institutional structure in that area including “youth studies” carried out as a university discipline and “youth centers” as one of the important points of contact between youth workers and young people. Those centers can provide information, guidance, and opportunities in different areas such as project funding according to the different needs of the young people. So much so that, in different countries there are also centers which have studios in order to allow young people to make music. When we consider the general situation in Europe, we see that the socio-political structure in each country and the consequent different needs affect the contents and practices of youth policies in those countries quantitatively and qualitatively.<sup>16</sup>

- **Evaluating young people independent of time and space**

Another approach we come across in studies on youth and in daily life is to make comparisons between generations by assuming that the state of being young is independent of time. In daily life this approach can be observed in phrases beginning with “when I was at your age...”. Many examples of those and similar comparisons can be noticed in Turkey’s gerontocratic daily life.

Moreover, especially in studies focusing on political participation, but also not limited to them, claiming that young people of today are quite “apolitical” is a very dominant

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<sup>16</sup> For a compilation which analysis on the historical development of designing youth studies in Europe according to different needs of young people, see, Kurtaran and Yurttagüler, 2014.

approach. Limiting the boundaries of politics with people's affiliation to political parties, this approach can overlook the fact that young people can take part in policy formulation and implementation processes through different ways such as the civil society and the internet. As pointed out in some studies, young people are not insensitive to political issues, but there is a change in the ways and approaches they use in expressing their opinions (Lüküslü, 2009). Besides when making decisions, young people take their families's political attitude as a point of reference and they complain that they cannot participate politics actively, because, as a consequence of their families' past experiences and social circumstances, they are concerned that they can get themselves into trouble (KONDA, 2014). However, the life styles and the needs of the society as well as the young people as a part of that society has changed in time, as a result of the change in social circumstances. Therefore, in that respect, a fixed and essentialist definition of young people can create serious problems.

- **Generalizations about young people**

The analysis of youth policies in Turkey demonstrate that those policies are commonly based on different visions of those in power regarding young people; in other words those in power all “imagine”<sup>17</sup> a youth of certain characteristics and use all the laws, services and opportunities in their hand in order to make this “imaginary youth” real.

A natural consequence of this essentialist definition of youth is the frequent use of generalizations that contain holistic judgments about young people. Those generalizations, which appear to change according to the historical and social circumstances of a particular period, can be positive judgments as “young people initiates change, they are the engines of society” as well as negative ones like “young people create problems, they tend to commit crimes”. This in turn influences how young people are handled at the policy level. When young people are regarded as the causes of a problem, the consequent policies naturally put into practice to “solve that problem”. On the contrary, when young people are evaluated from a value-based practice, those processes focus on improvements for ensuring young people to live as equal citizens in the society.

- **Ignoring historical conditions in discussions concerning young people**

The changes in international conjecture as a result influence the changes in attitudes toward young people and inevitably youth policies as outputs of those changing

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<sup>17</sup> For a study tracing those youth visions based on a discourse analysis of parliamentarians, see, Yurttagüler, 2014.

attitudes. One of the particular consequences of the 2008 financial crisis in continental Europe has been the deepening of the problem of financing the welfare state models which in fact have been an issue of debate since 1980s. As a result of this situation, young people, refugees, poor people, and similar groups that consist more vulnerable segments of the society have been affected from this process of austerity.

According to the “2012 Global Employment Report” prepared by the International Labor Organization (ILO), in 2011 74.8 million young people between ages 15-24 were unemployed. This figure indicates an increase of 4 million since 2007. The report states that the ratio of global youth unemployment equal to 12,7 percent is still one point higher than the level before crises, while unemployment among young people is 3 times higher than that of adults (ILO, 2012). European Youth Report, published by the European Commission in September 2012 shows that youth unemployment among those aged 15-24 has been rocketed from 15 percent in February 2008 to 22,6 percent in June 2012. This implies a 50 percent increase in youth employment in the last four years (European Commission, 2012).

If we are to give examples from different countries, even only the rates of unemployment demonstrate the situation of young people in countries that are affected from financial crisis. For example, between 2008-2012 youth unemployment rate among those between ages 15-24 has increased from 37,9 percent to 53,2 percent in Spain, and from 25,8 percent to 55,3 percent in Greece.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, sub-groups of young people can be more severely affected from that situation. For instance, as of 2012, the unemployment rate between young women aged 15-24 was 63.2 percent in Greece.

Compared to the countries in the premiere league, countries like Turkey, which have more similar structures to the ones in BRICS countries<sup>19</sup>, have been affected differently from the fluctuations in the global economy during the previous period. Though growth rates in those countries have been higher than global averages, various changes have occurred particularly related to the characteristics of the labor market. A concrete example of this, which will be examined in detail in the following sections, is that while the rates of youth unemployment have been stable in Turkey after the crisis compared to countries that have directly experienced the crisis, it has become obvious that the number of young people working in insecure jobs has raised quite substantially. In countries like Turkey, which have integrated to the world economy, the risks arising from international economic crisis and developments increase the vulnerability of young people (TÜİK, 2011). In that context, the fact that

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<sup>18</sup> OECD LFS by sex and age indicators

[http://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DatasetCode=LFS\\_SEXAGE\\_I\\_R](http://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DatasetCode=LFS_SEXAGE_I_R)

<sup>19</sup> This abbreviations derived by taking the first letters of Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa is used for defining a particular set of developing countries.

global developments also change the needs of young people in Turkey should be taken into account.

### **3. Basic Youth Indicators**

In this section we aim to bring together and interpret the basic indicators related to young people and to draw conclusions about the socio-economic environment surrounding them. Those conclusions should serve as a guide for the debates on policies concerning young people. Since in the following sections we will analyse the policies implemented by institutions and bring forward proposals concerning those policies, here we will only underline important points about those indicators. The indicators we examine include those related to demography, immigration, marriage, unemployment, health insurance, income level, youth mobility, and public spending on youth.

Since, when making evaluations on young people, there is a dominant tendency to give priority to the educational needs of young people due to the specific characteristics of the country, we did not include indicators related to education in our study. This does not mean that education is not important for young people or that we do not think this issue is important. To the contrary, as a need and a right, education is always among the issues concerning young people.<sup>20</sup> Yet, when writing this paper, we preferred an approach that aims to increase the visibility of issues other than education. We did not include indicators related to the autonomy of young people and the freedom of association, since those issues are covered in two other studies in this book.

- **Demography**

It is generally acknowledged that young people constitute an important part of the society in Turkey. However, it is also a fact that this “importance” is attributed as a result of a statistical significance. Therefore, paradoxically this argument also implies that as the ratio of young people in total population decreases statistically each year, the “importance” of young people also will decrease in tandem. Yet, though a particular group’s statistical share in population can be an important input for the formulation of policies especially in cases where extensiveness of a policy is among the criteria, it may not be that important for a rights-based policy approach.

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<sup>20</sup> In fact important reports on the topic have been published in Turkey and the organizations which are mainly focused on educational reforms quite successfully bring forward those issues to the public agenda.

**Table 1: Youth Population in Turkey, 2009 – 2013**

	2009		2010		2011		2012		2013	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
<b>15-19</b>	6.234.620		6.277.307		6.317.583		6.405.552		6.477.722	
<b>20-24</b>	6.280.117		6.267.787		6.224.591		6.186.089		6.214.024	
<b>15 - 24</b>	12.514.737	17,25	12.545.094	17,02	12.542.174	16,78	12.591.641	16,65	12.691.746	16,55
<b>Popu- lation</b>	72.561.312		73.722.988		74.724.269		75.627.384		76.667.864	

**Source:** TÜİK (Turkish Statistical Institute) The Results of the Address Based Population Register System (ADNKS), 2009-2013 <http://tuikapp.tuik.gov.tr/adnksdagitapp/adnks.zul>

As can be observed in the table, in Turkey the share of young people in the total population decreases every year. According to 2013 figures, young people between ages 15-24 constitute 16,55 percent of the population. As demonstrated in Table 1, the share of young people in the total population is falling steadily since 2009. However, though this ratio has been decreasing, the total number of young people has stayed relatively constant despite minor differences.

Youth population will not fall though its share in the total population will continue to decrease in the near future, as the total population in Turkey is still increasing. However, among youth population the share of those between ages 15-24 who constitute the majority now will fall and the youth population will mostly consist of those between ages 25-29. Another important point is the expectation that the share of disadvantaged young people within the youth population will increase as birth rates in Turkey's less developed regions as well as particularly the disadvantaged districts of big cities will fall relatively in the coming years.

This point is curial for the design of youth policies. In recent years, proposals aiming to rejuvenate the population like cuts in income taxes for those with at least three children and earning minimum wage and interest-free marriage loans for couples under age 25 have been discussed in the public. Independent of the results of those discussions at the political level, those proposals should be designed together with policies aiming especially to increase the wealth of young people and policies related to social insurance, health, social inclusion, social protection, and empowerment for enhancing the participation of young people.

In addition to that, as, due to the changes in Turkey's population, the country will enter a period of Demographic Window of Opportunity during which the population in working age will reach the highest level until 2015, using this phase effectively will create important opportunities. If appropriate economic and social policies are implemented, and as a leading step, all the disadvantaged young people, including

those in the disadvantaged sub-groups can benefit from those opportunities, such a possibility will arise (Egitim Reformu Girisimi, 2007).

- **Migration**

Migration is one of the issues that is frequently mentioned when people are talking about young people. Especially due to the developments regarding the relations of production, migration from rural areas to big cities, especially to metropolitan cities has been continuing. This is also the case for young people. As seen in Table 2, young people constitute an important part of the total migrated population. If we put it very broadly, when the age differences among migrated population in different regions of Turkey as of 2009 is taken into account, one can argue that 3 in every 10 migrants are young persons. Moreover, despite the fluctuations observed in recent times, this ratio demonstrates an overall increase.

Another issue that is as equally important is the fact that the share of young migrants in the total youth population changes between 15 and 20 percent. In other words, roughly one in every 5 young persons have migrated during the last five years. This ratio, which especially has increased after 2008 crisis, fell in 2012, but increased again in 2013. We should also emphasize that total number of migrants relatively remained the same.

In that context, public services should be continuously adjusted according to the needs of both young people migrating to other cities and those who remain in their hometowns either because they prefer to stay or are not able to migrate. For example, for young people moving to other cities, availability of learning spaces such as youth centers which they can come together with other young people living in the city is important for both meeting the changing needs of those young people and to give them the opportunity to learn by experiencing the democratic culture which is based on the coexistence of differences. Similarly, it is important to design local youth policies according to the needs of the young people that have not migrated to other cities. Moreover, in both cases, it is also essential to adopt a needs-based approach which prioritizes the participation of young people.

**Table 2: Number and Ratios of Migrated Population According to Age Groups, 2009 - 2013**

		15 - 19	20 - 24	Share of young people in the migrated population %	The share of migrant young people in the youth population %	Total number of migrants	Total number of young migrants
2009	Male and Female (Total)	243.412	422.183	29,8	18	2.236.981	12.514.737
	Male	113.594	186.145	26,7		1.123.136	
	Female	129.818	236.038	32,8		1.113.845	
2010	Male and Female (Total)	239.293	406.010	27,3	19	2.360.079	12.545.094
	Male	112.489	178.936	24,7		1.177.639	
	Female	126.804	227.074	29,9		1.182.440	
2011	Male and Female (Total)	266.753	465.604	30,3	19	2.420.181	12.542.174
	Male	125.786	208.269	27,7		1.204.530	
	Female	140.967	257.335	32,8		1.215.651	
2012	Male and Female (Total)	257.434	326.219	30,0	15	1.942.874	12.591.641
	Male	119.090	143.619	27,1		968.805	
	Female	138.344	182.600	32,9		974.069	
2013	Male and Female (Total)	277.744	422.914	33,0	17	2.122.454	12.691.746
	Male	131.106	192.764	30,7		1.055.519	
	Female	146.638	230.150	35,3		1.066.935	

**Source:** TUIK, The Results of the Address Based Population Register System (ADNKS), 2009-2013  
<http://tuikapp.tuik.gov.tr/adnksdagitapp/adnks.zul>

### • Marriage

In Turkey, marriage negatively affects young people's freedom to make their own decisions. For young people, their areas of freedom obviously narrow down as their marital status changes from being single to engaged, and later to being married and sometimes being divorced/widowed. For example, according to the results of the survey conducted by KONDA within the Network project, while 79 percent of the



single young people can go to a movie/play whenever they want to, this ratio falls to 60 percent for those engaged and to 49 percent for those married. Similarly, while 88 percent of the singles can go out whenever they want to, the same ratio is 72 percent among those engaged, 49 percent among those married, and 33 percent among those divorced or widowed (KONDA, 2014).

When we evaluate from this perspective, we can claim that the fact that young people tend to marry in relatively later ages as seen in Table 3 is a positive development. The data for the last four years point out that this positive development improves steadily each year.

**Table 3: Average Marriage Age**

	Male	Female
<b>2009</b>	26,3	23
<b>2010</b>	26,5	23,2
<b>2011</b>	26,6	23,3
<b>2012</b>	26,7	23,5

(\*) Data for 2013 has not been published yet.

**Source:** TÜİK, 2009 - 2012 Marriage Statistics <http://tuikapp.tuik.gov.tr/demografiapp/evlenme.zul>

However, there are still differences between the average marrying age of young women and men. This in turn is one of the most important factors that negatively affects both the employment and the economic and individual independence of young women in Turkey. Moreover, as, independent of age differences, women are generally expected to have children and raise them, the men become the sole bread-winners in the families and this situation causes the reproduction of unequal gender roles in the society. As for the design of public services aiming to meet different needs, this figures which indicate a gender inequality can be regarded as a sign of the persistence of those inequalities.

### • Unemployment

Turkey is one of the countries which managed to attain very high growth rates at the global level during the last 10 years. However, when we examine the relationship between growth and employment, though there appears to be a minor decrease in youth unemployment, it is observed that the improvements in both general unemployment and youth unemployment are insufficient. As demonstrated in Table 4, unemployment rates which have been high especially after 2008 financial crisis, now

tend to fall. Yet, one-fifth of the young people seeking for jobs are not able to find one.

**Table 4: Youth Unemployment in Turkey, 2009 - 2012**

	<b>Total Youth Unemployment %</b>	<b>Unemployment among Young Men %</b>	<b>Unemployment among Young Women %</b>	<b>Total Unemployment %</b>
<b>2009</b>	24,7	24,9	24,5	12,6
<b>2010</b>	19,5	19,31	19,85	10,7
<b>2011</b>	17,7	16,2	20,4	8,8
<b>2012</b>	15,7	14,9	17,4	8,2

Source: ILO, 2013.

Moreover, though there is a decrease in all unemployment rates, the unemployment among young people is still two times higher than the rate for adults. Those figures differ from global youth unemployment figures in some aspects. This difference is related to particular circumstances in Turkey. For example, as of today, youth unemployment rates in Greece and Spain are both over 50 percent and this level is quite higher than the youth unemployment in Turkey. However, comparisons with other countries do not indicate similar results. In many Northern Europe countries, youth unemployment rates are lower than the level in Turkey. Moreover, when the average global youth unemployment rates are taken into account, there is a serious difference between the global youth unemployment rate that is around 12 percent and the youth unemployment in Turkey for the term 2009 and 2012 (ILO, 2013).

As it can be seen in Table 4 above, another important and apparent problem is the fact that Turkish economy cannot create sufficient number of jobs for young women. Except a small difference in 2009, in recent years unemployment rate among young men is quite low compared to the unemployment rate among young women.

**Table 5 - Labor force participation rates for young people and adults according to sex**

	Male		Female	
	Young	Adult	Young	Adult
<b>2009</b>	52,2	75,8	25,8	26,1
<b>2010</b>	50,9	76,3	26,3	28,0
<b>2011</b>	52,3	77,0	26,8	29,4
<b>2012</b>	50,8	76,5	25,9	30,5

**Source:** TUIK, Youth According to Statistics, 2009 - 2012

As it is demonstrated in Table 5, when we examine the labor participation rates for different sexes among young people and adults, we see that there are differences between young people and adults as well as young women and young men.

Between 2009 and 2011, the share of young people who do not enter to the labor force due to their education has increased from 54,8 percent to 59,8 percent. At the same period, when we examine the reasons why women cannot enter to the labor force, we see that though the increase in the share of those continuing education from 41 percent to 48,3 percent and the decrease in the share of those in domestic work from 42 percent to 38 percent can be regarded as positive developments, since the share of young men doing domestic work is zero percent, the inequality between sexes due to gender roles still continues (TUI, Youth According to Statistics, 2011).

When we relate labor force participation rates to education, the results point out that, after 2009, the labor force participation rate of has decreased for those continuing their education in high schools or equivalent schools as well as those in higher education, while the labor participation rate of illiterate young people and primary education graduates have been increasing. Especially during the last three years, the labor force participation rate among adults has remained more or less constant, while there are problems regarding the labor force participation rate of young people with higher education levels. Moreover, the gap between men and women still exist among those with higher education levels (TUIK, Youth According to Statistics, 2011).

In recent years, civic and public institutions carry out different studies focusing on the unemployment problem among young people. For example, Board of Young Entrepreneurs established in Türkiye Odalar ve Borsalar Birliği (TOBB) works for increasing entrepreneurship among young people through its boards in 70 cities.

İŞKUR's "Operation for Promoting Youth Employment", aiming to increase youth employment and vocational training courses for young people, as well as the grants provided by Development Agencies for increasing youth employment appear as leading tools of public support for that end. Moreover, the SSK premiums of young people between ages 18-29 who have been working since July 2008 are being paid by the Unemployment Insurance Fund for five years with gradually decreasing rates. According to the decision made by the Minimum Wage Determination Commission in December 2013, the wage gap between young people above and under age 16 has been closed and this practice which created an inequality among young people has been ended.

Despite those developments, as youth unemployment rate is two times higher than the unemployment rate among adults and because of the gender inequalities related to youth unemployment, young people are still in a disadvantaged position and there is a need for additional policies.

- **Social protection and health insurance**

When we examine different types of unemployment rates, we observe that the number of young people seeking for a job for the first time has increased between 2005-2011 and this can be interpreted as a sign of an upward trend in young people entering the labor market. However, as a result of the structural change in labor markets, while 13,5 percent of the labor force were recorded as "has worked in a temporary job and the work is completed" in 2005, the same percentage increased to 20,9 in 2011. This can be also linked to the effects of 2008 financial crisis in Turkey. Yet, whatever the reason is, temporary unemployment has been offered as an alternative to young people who have already been faced with difficulties in employment (TUIK, 2011). This situation also affects the dependency of young people to their families due to health insurance problems.

**Table 6: Relation between employment status and health insurance**

	Do you have health insurance? If yes, what kind?								
Do you work?	SGK, through job	Private insurance, through job	SGK, through family / spouse	Private insurance, through family / spouse	SGK, through paying own contributions (by himself/herself or by others)	Private insurance, through paying own contributions (by himself/herself or by others)	Green Card	No health insurance	Total
Full-time %	61,97	3,60	12,36	1,10	1,25	0,63	3,29	15,81	100
Part-time / irregular %	21,26	2,36	56,30	0,00	0,00	0,00	3,54	16,54	100
Has not worked / unemployed %	7,55	1,89	48,11	2,83	2,83	0,00	8,49	28,30	100
Total %	45,85	3,10	27,33	1,00	1,10	0,40	3,90	17,32	100

Source: KONDA, 2014.

As Table 6 demonstrates, 56,30 percent of young people working in part-time/irregular jobs benefit from SGK through their families or spouses. In other words, half of the young people can access SGK services through their families, although they are working in part-time or irregular jobs. One can claim that, young people cannot directly benefit from health insurance, as they are more often working in irregular jobs without security. When we add this figure the ones who do not have health insurance although they work full-time and part-time, we can claim that young people have serious problems regarding their access to health insurance.

Especially young people who work in short-term and/or insecure jobs may not benefit from unemployment insurance since it requires to pay social security premiums for at least 600 days in the last three years before the employment contract is terminated and having worked consecutively for 120 workdays prior to becoming unemployed.

#### • Income Status

It is important for young people to have a regular income in order to develop their independency. Whether this income is provided by the family as allowance, received as a credit/scholarship from a state institution, or earned by working, influence the relation between young people and the persons/institutions providing that income. In that regard, each type of income creates positive and negative results. For example, the higher education credits provided by YURTKUR, though in small amounts, decrease young people's

dependency to their families and thus positively affect young people's ability to make their own decisions (KONDA, 2014). However, since repayments of those credits begin two years after graduation and the total amount of debts are calculated according to the inflation rate of white goods, in a country like Turkey with a high level of youth unemployment, this situation creates additional problems and young people find themselves obliged to repay those credits by taking loans from banks, which in turn creates another form of dependency. Similarly, though the income young people earn by working in a job positively affects their ability to stand on their own feet, if a young person is obliged to work in a job and continue his/her education at the same time, this can cause different problems for young people. In that regard, social policy tools that can provide different income supports to young people become crucial.

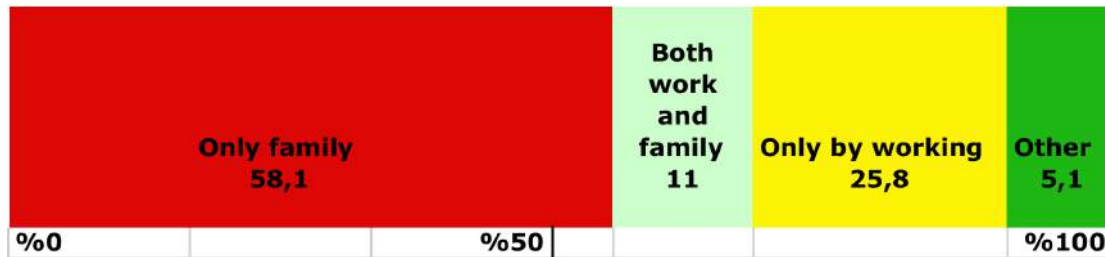
**Table 7 - Incomes of Young People**

<b>Which one is the source of your monthly income?</b>	<b>%</b>
Job/by working	36,8
Allowance from family / spouse	69,1
Pension received through deceased parents / spouse	1,3
State scholarship	9,6
University scholarship	1,8
Public loan	4,7
Other types of private scholarship	2,0
Other income	1,0
No income	1,3

**Source:** KONDA, 2014

As shown in Table 7, the main source of income for young people is the allowance they receive from their families or spouses. If we take into account that according to the above mentioned survey married young people constitute 10 percent of the total youth population, we can understand that most of those allowances are provided by parents of single young people. Therefore, it is plausible to conclude that generally young people need to receive an allowance from their families which substitutes an income that can be earned by working in a regular job. Moreover, as can be seen in table 8, since young people who work in regular jobs may also need allowance from their families, this can point out the need for creating job opportunities for young people so as to improve their income statuses.

**Table 8- Young People's sources of income according to categories**



Source: KONDA; 2014

Young people's need for additional income even though they are working in a job is also similarly striking in the case of young people receiving scholarships for their education. In fact, 80 percent of young people receiving public scholarships also need allowance from their families. Moreover, 17 percent of young people both work in a job and receive public scholarship. This evidence strengthens our argument that the scholarship/loan opportunities for young people are far from being sufficient.

- **Mobility**

Mobility opportunities provide young people learning possibilities outside formal education (Friesenhahn et al., 2013). To the extent that young people can access opportunities for learning mobility, a significant progress in their individual and particularly social learning skills can be observed. In terms of individual effects, we can notice an important progress in self respect, individuality, autonomy, and self-efficacy, while, in terms of social learning, striking advancement can be achieved in positive social adaptation, adapting to others, and positive social resistance indicators (TOG, 2010). In other words, more opportunities for mobility based learning mean more favorable conditions for young people.

Both the state and the NGOs must create mobility opportunities for young people. The mobility opportunities provided by the state are evaluated in this report under the sections titled National Agency and Ministry of Youth and Sports.

When designing mobility opportunities and tools for accessing them, differences among young people should be taken into account. For example, in Turkey, 70 percent of the students and 69 percent of young men have stated that they visited somewhere outside their town during last year; those percentages are significantly high compared to other groups (KONDA, 2014). Furthermore, the percentage of those who are able to visit places outside their cities is higher for those whose mothers have

higher education levels. While this ratio is 48 percent for those who have illiterate mothers, it is 90 percent for those whose mothers have undergraduate or graduate degrees. As it is obvious, the more disadvantageous a young person is, the less likely for him/her to visit places outside his/her city.

Similar results can also be observed in the answers given to the question “Have you ever visited abroad?”. The young people whose mothers have low education levels are more likely to experience financial problems or are working in a job and therefore the ratio of those visiting a foreign country is lower for that group. Though those results indicate class differences, from the perspective of gender inequalities, there are also serious gaps between males and females from the same classes. For example, 30 percent of young women state that they will not get permission from their family when they are asked whether they could be able to attend a short term training in another city in case they are invited. This ratio is 8.5 percent for young men. The ratio of those answering positively to the same question is also higher for young men. The results related to the opportunity to visit a foreign country is quite similar to the results related to visiting another city.

Thus, services should be designed according to different conditions of young people in order to promote their access to mobility which is the most important way of participating non-formal learning. This situation can be facilitated not only through services provided by public institutions, but also through services public institutions provide for youth CSOs.

- **Public spending for youth empowerment**

The level of public spending on youth in Turkey is an important indicator explaining the situation of youth policies in the country. Apart from the spending of local governments, public institutions making public spending for young people can be divided into two groups. The first group consists of institutions that make direct spending for young people, while the institutions in the second group indirectly provide public services for young people. The main data on that subject is obtained from the studies of Public Expenditures Monitoring Platform (KAHIP; 2010, 2011, and 2012). In addition to that, the manual we prepared about public spending on youth empowerment also provides basic information on that subject (Yentürk, Kurtaran ve Yılmaz; 2014).

In order to monitor public spending on youth empowerment, we examined expenditures of the Ministry of Youth and Sports, General Directorate of the Ministry of Youth and Sport/General Directorate of Sports, Higher Education Credit and Dormitory Agency (YURTKUR), Center for European Union Education and Youth Programmes (National Agency); expenditures on youth made by GAP Administration



Human and Social Development General Coordination; youth related expenditures of the Ministry of Development's Social Assistance Program (SODES); Turkish Employment Agency's (İŞKUR) expenditures on youth employment and the transfers made to Turkish Employment Agency for promoting youth employment due to employment package; TUBITAK scholarships and the expenditures of the Venture Support programs; and the Venture Capital Support provided by the Ministry of Industry and Commerce.<sup>21</sup> Due to insufficient data, we had to exclude the expenditures of local governments when monitoring public spending on youth empowerment.

The expenditures of the above listed institutions that work on youth empowerment, including supports for sports, participation to social life, housing, education, and transition to labor market, have increased from 2.888.054.984 TL in 2009 to 5.760.483.973 TL in 2012 (Table 9). The ratio of public spending on youth empowerment to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) are calculated as 0,30, 0,30, 0,37, and 0,41 percent respectively for the years between 2009 and 2012.<sup>22</sup> Those figures point out a very low level of increase. Those ratios also indicate that, in spite of the political discourse in Turkey which appears to attach importance to young people, the level of public resources allocated for youth is substantially insufficient. Therefore, we can rightfully state that young people, who constitute 17 percent of the country's population, are invisible in the budget.

**Table 9. Total Public Spending on Youth Empowerment and as a percentage of GDP**

	Total Spending	As a percentage of GDP
<b>2009</b>	2.888.054.983,65	0,30
<b>2010</b>	3.319.956.155,94	0,30
<b>2011</b>	4.832.334.254,43	0,37
<b>2012</b>	5.764.391.220,33	0,41
<b>2013*</b>	6.670.562.220,00	0,42

(\*) The figure for 2013 is an estimate

**Source:** Yentürk, Kurtaran ve Yılmaz, 2014

Expenditures of YURTKUR have a share of 66 percent in total spending on youth empowerment. 45 percent of YURTKUR expenditures consist of loans for students.

<sup>21</sup> Expenditures on social protection, justice, and health are not included in the calculation of total public spending on youth empowerment for young people between ages 5-18. Those expenditures are analysed in the Guide on Public Spending for Children. See, Yentürk, Beyazova, and Durmuş, 2013.

<sup>22</sup> Total amount of public spending on social assistance, justice, combat against child labor, and health expenditures covering children and young people between ages 0-18 is calculated as TL 14,5 billion, which is equal to 1.1 percent of the GDP (Yentürk, Beyazova, and Durmuş, 2013).

Half of the rest is used for scholarships, while the other half is allocated for the management of dormitories and administrative expenses. Within the total spending on youth, Directorate of Sports is the institution that allocates the highest amount of resources for young people outside education.

It is calculated that expenditures on youth empowerment constitute only 2 percent of the total spending of the Ministry of Youth and Sports (MYS). In terms of public spending on youth, İŞKUR and the Unemployment Insurance Fund share the third rank, following YURTKUR and the Directorate of Sports.

According to our calculations, in year 2012, 68 percent of the spending on youth empowerment is allocated to young people in education which constitute 30 percent of total youth population (OECD, 2013). While the young people outside the education system constitute 70 percent of the total population, their share in total spending on youth empowerment is limited to 32 percent. The lower share allocated to young people outside education from the already low level of public spending on youth empowerment creates a barrier against their to social and economic life.

#### **4. Implementation of Youth Policies**

In this section we will examine two essential areas of youth policies. This section on the one hand will contribute to the mapping of existing policy processes, while also will provide a critical inventory of the existing practices. The basic laws and official documents constitute the first of those areas. In that framework, we will examine the National Youth and Sports Policy Document prepared under the coordination of the MYS. Following that, we will explain the recent developments related to youth in the Constitution and the Law on Municipalities. Finally, we will review the information and practices of the institutions that are directly providing services to young people by referring to their own reports as well as other sources.

##### **4.1. Youth policies in basic laws and documents**

- **National Youth and Sports Policy Document**

While one of main the sources for understanding the framework of any state policy on youth is the Constitution and the laws, the other one is the strategy and policy documents based on those laws. So much so that, those documents establish the values, boundaries, and opportunities of the framework available for the actions of related parties. Moreover, sometimes they also contain important information on what kind of activities will be put into practice within a given framework. In that regard, one of the main legal documents used as a reference in determining youth policies in

Turkey is the “National Youth and Sports Policy Document” prepared by the MYS. Adopted by the Council of Ministers on November 26, 2012, the Law entered into force on January 27, 2013, through its publication in the Official Journal. Therefore, this document is a relatively recent effort. In an adequate way, the document is planned to be revised in every four year.

In today’s world opening the policy making processes on different areas to the participation of those likely to be effected from that policies as well as to organizations representing them is perceived as a requirement for democracy. During the development process of the National Youth (and Sports) Policy Document, by organizing 17 youth workshops and one youth council and by gathering opinions via internet, the Ministry has demonstrated a remarkable effort for ensuring the participation of young people and other stakeholders working on youth issues. That effort is critical as for the first time formulating a youth policy with a participatory approach is being experienced in Turkey.

National Youth (and Sports) Policy Document defines youth as people between ages 14-29. The Policy Document does not provide information on why that particular age range has been chosen. As is known, in our country everyone below 18 is accepted as a child. Individuals of age 16 and over are allowed to work. Of course the period of transition from childhood to youth occurs in a wider age range, including also those ages. Therefore, it will be useful to include in the document an evaluation on which policy approach will be adopted for the adolescence period during which youth and child policies interact (Yılmaz, 2013).

The book on how youth policies are developed in EU countries prepared by the Council of Europe and translated into Turkish during the Network project notes two important points that should be paid attention to when a national youth strategy is being decided (Denstad, 2009). The first one is to ensure the participation of youth NGOs, while the second one is to reflect the perceptions of young people in the document.

Given that national youth policies will be renewed in every four year, the issue of ensuring the participation of young people, the organizations founded and administered by young people, as well as the organizations working on youth related subjects becomes critical. First of all, one has to emphasize that targets, rules, and the boundaries of participation mechanisms and processes should be made transparent (OECD, 2001).

Though at the local government level -despite its limitations- it is possible to ensure the participation of young people through bodies like local youth assemblies, the difficulties of involving young people directly to decision making process at the level of central government are obvious. Hence, as they both have an expertise in the areas related to youth and are accepted as representatives of young people, consulting and

including civil society institutions working on youth issues to those processes are essential. However, the issue of which NGOs are to be included in those processes is debatable.

The participation of youth NGOs to decision making processes can be legitimate under two conditions (Denstad, 2009):

- Youth organization should have an effective internal democracy in which representatives of the members are selected by the votes of those members: in that regard, those organizations can be expected to operate at an age level lower than the voting age. The lower limit of this age should be determined according to domestic conditions.
- Those institutions should be controlled and managed by young people themselves so that, instead of adult organizations that see young people as one of the vulnerable groups that should be “defended”, they really act like youth organizations.

In fact, the criteria above established with a technical approach define what youth NGOs are and therefore clears the way for a national debate to decide which NGOs can be defined and included as youth organizations within a participatory process (Yilmaz, 2013).

Additionally, young people who cannot access to NGOs or are not affiliated to them can be included in the participatory mechanisms through bodies like Youth Assemblies which have a legal base in Turkey according to the Regulation on City Councils. In other words, youth NGOs and those kind of assemblies are not ends, but only means for reaching young people. On the other hand, other ways of reaching young people should also be explored and youth NGOs should not be allowed to possess monopoly powers in representing young people. Depending on national realities and conditions, those practices can also be expanded to cover different groups (such as youth groups that do not have a legal status). Moreover, internet based solutions can be developed for participation at the individual level. Open coordination method, which is also implemented during the preparation of the White Paper on Youth published by EU in 2001, is an example of an ideal process of functioning of those mechanisms. In that process, 440 proposals were developed through national conferences organized in 17 countries, those proposals were reduced to 80 during a larger conference with the participation of 450 representatives from 31 countries, more than 60 organizations gathered with the Economic and Social Council, researchers were allowed to provide feedback on the proposals, meetings were organized with decision makers in every European capital, and National Youth Councils, young people, youth organizations, researchers and public servants gathered during a conference in order to set the priorities before the document was finalized and debates were held in the European Parliament with the contribution of 300

persons consisting mostly of young people. In other words, such a comprehensive process which could be implemented throughout Europe establishes an example for implementing a similar debate mechanism in Turkey.

In addition to the participation of youth NGOs to the policy making mechanisms, the perceptions of young people included in the document should also be evaluated. In the document young people are sometimes presented as a social group that “needs protection” and sometimes as the “bearers of the future”. On the other hand, while the document emphasizes on universal human right values, the limits of which are determined via international human rights conventions, it also makes reference to national and moral values which are not explicitly defined and limits of which are ambiguous. In that regard, we can state that the document’s perception of youth is not clear.

There can be different perspectives on how a youth policy should perceive the role of young people in the society. Those perceptions have been generally dominated by a problem oriented approach. Such a perspective sees young people either as a vulnerable group at risk which therefore needs to be protected by government policies or as a group that creates problems. Young people are regarded either as potential victims because of the way they have been raised and the conditions they live in, or potential criminals because of their personalities and characteristics. A youth policy based on a perspective which sees young people not as a problem but as a source naturally focuses on finding ways for empowering young people in order to allow them to actively participate in social life and fulfill their potential. Such a policy intends to approach young people in an integrated way by taking into account young people themselves, their needs, and their problems. In such a perspective, the role of the government is to provide “opportunity packages” to young people (Denstad, 2009).

In this framework, which is defined in various publications (European Commission, 2001, 2006 ve 2009; Council of Europe, 2003; World Bank, 2007; Siurala, L. 2006; Williamson, H., 2002 and 2003), protecting young people from risks or giving young people the responsibility for the future of the society do not constitute the main criteria of success for a youth policy. Youth policies are evaluated according to a criteria which takes into account youth’s opportunities to participate in social life as young people and to become autonomous individuals during their youth, as well as the empowerment of young people for that end. Moreover, the evaluation criteria for youth policies in fact should be determined according to young people’s needs and their ability to defend their rights, rather than according to the opinions of adults on young people.

Though there are some deficiencies related to its content and development process, the fact that National Youth and Sports Policy Document is the first example of such

an attempt in the area of youth creates important opportunities and, given that it will also be revised in every 4 year, it also establishes a ground for advocacy to be used by youth NGOs. The more those advocacy efforts focus on the contents of the text and the efficiency of feed back process, the more potential it has to contribute to the establishment of a ground for advocacy that can empower related stakeholders. Moreover, it can also allow the state and the NGOs to experience a practical democratic method by giving them the opportunity to experience participation.

- **Youth in the Constitution**

Constitutional amendments are among legislative changes that directly affect youth policies implemented since 2009 which are being examined in this study. Sadly, Article 58 of the Constitutions still remains the same.

***IIX. Youth and sports***

***A. Protection of the youth***

**ARTICLE 58-** *The State shall take measures to ensure the education and development of the youth into whose keeping our independence and our Republic are entrusted, in the light of positive science, in line with the principles and reforms of Atatürk, and in opposition to ideas aiming at the destruction of the indivisible integrity of the State with its territory and nation.*

*The State shall take necessary measures to protect youth from addiction to alcohol and drugs, crime, gambling, and similar vices, and ignorance.*

***B. Development of sports and arbitration<sup>6</sup>***

**ARTICLE 59-** *The State shall take measures to develop the physical and mental health of Turkish citizens of all ages, and encourage the spread of sports among the masses.*

*The state shall protect successful athletes.*

The only article on youth in the 1982 Constitution is Article 58. Therefore it is easy to guess which opinions are implied by the reference made to “opposition to ideas aiming at the destruction of the indivisible integrity of the State”. Yet, in different conjectures, without any changes made, this article can also provide a ground for authorization of different types of opinions on the basis that they aim “to destruct the indivisible integrity of the State”.

On the other hand, there are no clear boundaries on the flexibility of the definition of harmful habits that young people should be protected stated as “alcohol and drugs, crime, gambling, and similar vices”, , on after which point the measures for protection can be allowed to intervene freedoms and private life, and on the extent those protective measures may intertwine with direct prohibitions. Recently those issues have also been discussed by the society. Both alcoholism and drug addiction are problems that can be regulated by health policies and that should cover adults as well

as young people. Similarly, struggle against criminality and gambling is already one of the basic responsibilities of the state (TOG, 2012).

The critical comment in the previous section on the National Youth and Sports Policy Document on the grounds that it perceives young people as problems and instrumentalise youth for important missions they will assume in the future, also holds for the Constitution.

An important chance for youth related constitutional changes was missed during the last referendum and had not been sufficiently discussed. Constitutional changes which were put to national vote on September 12, 2010 and were accepted by 57,8 percent of votes in favor have been one of the most contentiously debated changes experienced in Turkey in recent years. In this constitutional change package covering 27 articles, the amendment made in Article 10<sup>23</sup> could have important consequences for young people. Second Paragraph of Article 10 was complemented with the following sentence “Measures taken for this purpose shall not be interpreted as contrary to the principle of equality” and following that a new paragraph stating that “Measures taken for the children, the elderly and the disabled persons, widow spouses and orphans of persons who died in war or on duty and incapacitated persons and veterans cannot be considered as contrary to the principle of equality” was added. If youth could also be included among the disadvantaged groups listed in that paragraph, this could have provided a legal basis for positive changes to be made in youth policies in favor of young people.

- **Youth in Law on Municipalities**

According to Article 14 of the Law on Municipalities, the municipalities are responsible of providing “... youth and sporting activities...” directly or indirectly. The same law also stipulates that those services can be provided in two ways. The first one is direct action of the municipality to provide services for youth. The second way is to delegate those services to other institutions or corporations. For example, allowing NGOs to use various services like transportation, training facilities and as such free of charge can be regarded as a way of supporting their work. Youth NGOs can be supported by both ways. However, there is also an additional problem related to the fact that to whom and under what conditions those supports are to be provided are not clearly defined. As mentioned before, this problem can also be solved by a more technical approach.

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<sup>23</sup> ARTICLE 10- Everyone is equal before the law without distinction as to language, race, color, sex, political opinion, philosophical belief, religion and sect, or any such grounds. (Paragraph added on May 7, 2004; Act No. 5170) Men and women have equal rights. The State has the obligation to ensure that this equality exists in practice.

By drawing a framework of a participatory model which goes beyond institutional participation and allows young people to be included in the widest sense, the Revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life define eight priority areas, including informing young people on participation opportunities; promoting youth participation through new technologies; promoting youth participation in the media; encouraging young people to engage in voluntary work; supporting young people's projects and initiatives; supporting youth organizations; encouraging youth participation in NGOs and political parties; and promoting participation in education. With its youth focused approach, this Charter serves as an important document which indicates the direction of progress for the existing local government practices (Council of Europe, 2003 and 2011). All actions related to those eight areas mentioned before and also to additional ones have the potential to become important steps for increasing youth participation at the local level.

On the other hand, according to the Law, municipalities cannot make donations to NGOs. This prevents municipalities to provide NGOs access to the funds they need through grants or financial supports. Municipalities which aim to provide financial support to NGOs can do this only through cash transfers under "service provision" by acting as if they are buying services from those NGOs. However, even in that case, the NGOs should have a running commercial activity which requires a specific kinds of skills and experience, and therefore this condition particularly prevents youth NGOs to benefit from cash support provided by municipalities.

Furthermore, the article 4 of the Regulation on City Councils prepared under Article 76 of the Law on Municipalities recognizes youth assemblies. However, Article 6 defines youth related responsibilities of City Councils as "promoting the activities of children, young people, women and the disabled in social life and ensuring them to take an active role in local decision making mechanisms".

Though Youth Assemblies established under City Councils and facilitated by municipalities are bodies that are formed in order to strengthen the relations between young people and the municipalities and to give young people the opportunity to influence decision making processes, not only problems related to the scope of this process, the recognition of those bodies at the local level, budgetary restrictions, and opportunities to access, but also related to the participation of young people as autonomous actors independent of local political parties' authority still persist. Especially, since in-cash and in-kind budgets of those City Councils and Youth Assemblies are provided by the municipalities, a relation of dependency emerges and this negatively affects the independency of those Assemblies and their capacity to be open to the participation of young people from different segments of the society. There are features of Youth Assemblies that need to be improved such as physical conditions and accessibility, access to information on Youth Assemblies, oversight



and participation, service quality, and gender equality (TOG, 2011). Those evaluations do not imply that there are no examples of Youth Assemblies functioning under City Councils with a participatory approach. However, as reports prepared for the Magnifier to the Adress project in which young people monitored and evaluated the services provided by public institutions for the young people show, the general tendency appears to be the opposite (TOG, 2011).

According to Article 6 of the Law on Special Provincial Administration, special provincial administrations are “mandated and authorized to provide... youth and sports services... within the boundaries of their provinces”. As can be understood from the Article, though special provincial administrations have the authority to provide those services, the law itself makes it more difficult for those administrations to fulfill this mandate, while there is no option like outsourcing the provision of those services in the way it is allowed in the Law on Municipalities.

### **1.1.2. Public Institutions and Youth Policies**

There are several public institutions that provide services related to young people. The most important institution among those is the Ministry of Youth and Sports. On the other hand, since young people constitute a group that cross cuts many types of public services, there are also institutions which indirectly provide services for young people though they are not established particularly for this objective. The services provided for young people by those institutions and their contributions to youth policies are examined separately below.

- **Ministry of Youth and Sports**

Since the finalization of the 2009 Monitoring Report, the most important development related to youth policies in Turkey has been the transformation of the body which previously provided services as General Directorate of Youth and Sports to a ministry as of June 8, 2011. During the last two years before that Ministry was established, a mixed group of representatives from civil and public institutions including different bureaucrats as well as universities and youth NGOs had organized a series of meetings in order to determine the missions of such a body. The process most importantly should be criticized for not making an open call for the area of youth. On the other hand, civil participation within this mixed group with a high level of representation of experts working in the area of youth was one of its strongest points. This group later on discussed which type of institution (ministry, agency or a general directorate) should be established to fulfill those missions and following that this institution has begun to function as a ministry after a short period of time. During the last five years passed after the Ministry was established, which is covered by this

study, the Ministers have changed three times and those changes have undermined institutional continuity.

As of today, the responsibilities of the ministry include to support young people and promote their participation through providing services like guidance, access to information, and counseling; to establish coordination and cooperation with other public institutions on issues related to youth; to conduct research; to determine the basic methods and principles on this issue including carrying out projects directly. Additionally, the Ministry is also responsible of the administration of sports policy and to ensure implementing it according to a specific set of rules. Moreover, National Youth and Sports Policy Document also legally opened the way to convene Youth and Sports Councils and Working Groups in order to work on issues for which the objectives are clearly set.

Three General Directorates exist in the Ministry: General Directorate of Youth Services, General Directorate of Projects and Coordination, and General Directorate of Education, Culture and Research. In addition to those general directorates, General Directorate of Sports, Higher Education Credit and Dormitory Agency (YURTKUR), and General Directorate of Spor-Toto<sup>24</sup> are also related to the Ministry due to its status.

The operations of MYS should be divided into two as general directorate and ministry for the period covered by that monitoring report. When compared to the Ministry, it is observed that, due to more limited personnel and resources, less activities had been carried out during the period of the General Directorate. Youth Camps organized under the Department of Youth Services within the General Directorate and other activities like providing grants to youth NGOs and running youth centers had continued. As an important positive practice during that period, we should note administrative costs had been included in the amounts of grants provided. Ending this practice and switching to project based grants have negatively affected the capacity development of youth NGOs. However, in the previous period, there were no clearly defined objective criteria used in the decisions on how to distribute grants to institutions that have the status to operate as youth clubs. Moreover, during that first period, under Turkey-Sweden Cooperation in Youth Policy project, a research study was conducted and a training and a conference were organized. Youth exchange programs were organized under bilateral agreements with various countries. Activities at the local level were held for increasing youth employment via a grant provided by the Switzerland government and those activities were implemented in Adana, Balıkesir, Kocaeli, Konya, and Muğla with the financial support of S-UN Fund Project. As a result, 500 thousand US dollars were transferred to 33 projects. Moreover, several cooperation opportunities with the Council of Europe were put into

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<sup>24</sup> National weekly sports lottery.

practice via trainings and seminars. As another significant development, a cooperation protocol was signed with the Ministry of Education (ME) through a protocol which allowed shared usage of available facilities.

The activities of the old Youth Services Department has been continuing mostly under the Youth Services General Directorate established within the in the Ministry which replaced the previous General Directorate and in addition to that several projects targeting young people have been implemented under the Projects and Coordination General Directorate. Moreover, there are also other activities which still continues such as the youth camps and the youth centers. In order to allow young people to access those services in the most easy, the cheapest, and the most rapid way, the Ministry has targeted to achieve a significant level of internet visibility. As of today, more than 15 web sites, various Facebook pages, and twitter accounts of major projects are being actively used for that purpose.

However, as we mentioned frequently in the previous sections of the report, while increases in the diversity and extensiveness of the activities as well as raises in the number of young people participating those activities are among basic success indicators for such a public policy, they are not the only criteria. For instance, Youth Train<sup>25</sup> which allowed young people to visit different cities and experience different cultures; Youth Camps<sup>26</sup> which allowed young people to socialize; Mediterranean Peace Boat of Turkey<sup>27</sup> which was a similar activity at the international level; Youth Leader Camps<sup>28</sup> which have been organized under different themes like cinema/media, journalism, and science/technology in order to enhance young people's experience in different areas; Seyyah<sup>29</sup> program which also gave the young people the opportunity to visit different places and experience their culture; and many other similar projects have been implemented after the Ministry was established. Moreover, during the implementation of those projects, partnerships have been established with several public institutions, like Turkish State Railways. When we evaluate from that perspective, striking increase in the number of young people reached compared the previous periods is one of the important developments. Additionally, the increase in the available social mobility opportunities is also crucial and positive for the development of learning environments outside schools.

If we are to give quantitative examples, 148 youth centers have been still working under MYS and the construction of new youth centers has been continuing. There is an ambitious and important target set to increase the number of youth centers to 500 within 5 years. The number of youth camps were increased to 12 in 2013, allowing

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<sup>25</sup> <http://www.gencliktreni.gsb.gov.tr/>

<sup>26</sup> <http://genclikkamplari.gov.tr>

<sup>27</sup> <http://www.turkiyebarisgemisi.gsb.gov.tr/>

<sup>28</sup> <http://www.lidergenclik.gsb.gov.tr/>

<sup>29</sup> <http://www.seyyah.gsb.gov.tr/>

around 30.000 young people to benefit from that opportunity free of charge. Only by the Seyyah project, mobility of 150.000 young people have been accomplished, 195 of 2.600 applications made to the Youth Projects Support Program have been financed by providing a total amount of grants equal to 22.000.000 TL only for the first grant call made in 2013. As these examples point out, there are striking differences in figures compared to previous periods.

The Ministry has ended organizing mixed Youth Camps in 2012. The reasons for separating the camps for girls and boys is explained as to increase the participation of disadvantaged young girls and to respond the demands coming from families. Legally State's activities favoring disadvantaged groups cannot claimed to be violating the principle equality as a result of the changes made by the last referendum. In that regard, such a practice aiming to increase the participation of young women to youth camps can be accepted as a practice that do not violate the principle of equality only if alternative options for youth camps are also available. Those options are not available and while the practice in the previous period had also been discriminative as it excluded a certain group, the non-availability of mixed camp options can be evaluated in a similar way.

13 youth organizations together submitted a letter to the Ministry which emphasized that by bringing young people from different sexes together and allowing them to socialize, mixed youth camps contributes to prevent the emergence of an unequal system against women in the future in employment, political decision making, and family life and therefore providing those camps is an important necessity related to every area of social life.<sup>30</sup> Moreover, we should also note that, particularly for young people over 18, the primary address for the question on which type of camp to participate should be young people themselves, instead of their families. In the research conducted during the Network project, 2.508 young people throughout Turkey were asked the question "If you go to another city with your peers, perhaps to a youth camp, would you like to go to a mixed-sex or separate-sex camp?". 43 percent of the respondents preferred mixed camps, while 26 percent chose separate ones, and 31 percent were indifferent (KONDA, 2014).

Organizing both mixed and separate sex youth camps and other types of national level mobility activities is also important as it is a sign that public institutions accept the approach we mentioned previously which includes providing "opportunity" packages by public youth policies according to different needs and demands, keeping an equal distance to all citizens, and perceiving young people not as a group that has a tendency to criminality and needs protection. The insufficiency of opportunities in Turkey that allow young people to socialize, provide a constructive environment for bringing together different identities and cultures, and promote common activities

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<sup>30</sup> <http://tog.org.tr/haber/201/genclik-kamplariyla-ilgili-yeni-duzenleme-konusunda.html>

creates many negative results for young people. First of all, young people cannot develop a culture of coexistence. That in turn leads to an increase in intolerance within the society and in instances of hate speech. Therefore, providing opportunities which allow young people to get to know each other with their differences and socialize together should be recognized as one of the essential principles of any youth policy. The basic way of doing that is to design public services that respond to the needs of different groups, not only to the needs of the majority (Yentürk, Kurtaran ve Yılmaz, 2014).

National Youth Councils that exist in every EU member are upper bodies that have been established in order to promote participation of young people through NGOs representing them to the decisions on issues that are related to them. In many countries, those bodies are officially recognized. Moreover, they also stand out as important and civic examples of good governance that are financially supported by the states despite their autonomous status. Regarding the absence of a National Youth Council as an important gap, MYS took a pertinent decision and has begun to work toward that direction. However, the Council is intended to be established under the Ministry and this has been made possible by adding a new article to the existing Decree on the Organization and the Duties of MYS on March 1, 2013<sup>31</sup>.

On the other hand, as one of the main institutions bringing together National Youth Councils and international youth NGOs, European Youth Forum<sup>32</sup> defines its rules for membership as:

- To accept the objectives of the Forum and to work for those objectives;
- To be a non-governmental and non-profit organization;
- To accept the principles of European Convention on Human Rights and to have democratic objectives and a democratic structure;
- To accept the status of the Forum (working principles):
- To work with the youth and to have a decision making mechanism consisting of young people;
- To work independently without any influence from an outside authority.

In that regard, we can expect that a National Youth Council established under the Ministry will receive a negative reaction in terms of its recognition in Europe by similar bodies and as a legitimate actor. In order to ensure that an institution for young people is established according to the above criteria, youth civil society

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<sup>31</sup> Statutory Decree, No: 311

<sup>32</sup> [http://www.youthforum.org/assets/2013/05/0505A-10\\_ENG\\_Statutes\\_European\\_Youth\\_Forum\\_Nov2010.pdf](http://www.youthforum.org/assets/2013/05/0505A-10_ENG_Statutes_European_Youth_Forum_Nov2010.pdf)

organizations in Turkey has started to work for the establishment of an autonomous body.<sup>33</sup>

The findings obtained by the civic monitoring activities carried out by young people in 2011 related to the existing youth centers (TOG, 2011) give hints about how those youth centers should be improved. According to those results, the membership system of those youth centers must be redesigned. This is needed because the same documents are required separately by both the membership system and the system for activities, creating a red tape practice. Moreover, in some instances, documents for membership that are not stated in the regulations can also be demanded from applicants. The physical conditions of the youth centers can be rearranged for the access of disabled young people, transportation services in the evenings and nights can be provided, and those centers can develop their relations with young people in their localities. Most of the youth centers are able to use a separate building and this can be evaluated as a positive point in terms of space. However, possessing a separate building does not always imply that this building provides the physical conditions designed according to the needs of young people. Besides activity oriented youth centers, young people also need centers that they can use for spending their free time. The activities of the centers should go beyond services designed by center's personnel and provided for young people; instead, local participation can be deepened by designing and even implementing those activities with the participation of young people.

From the perspective of expanding the existing public services, implementation of those activities directly by MYS is important. Furthermore, in an environment in which MYS targets a policy of expansion, the effectiveness of youth work in Turkey can be increased through small but important types of support like allowing youth NGOs to use those facilities, giving young people the opportunity to use the center's address when they make an application for founding an association. Beyond that, if those centers also provide space for youth initiatives that do not have a legal status, they will create an important opportunity for interaction and increase the dynamism of those centers. Last but not least, if those centers also carry out joint activities with municipalities, civil society organizations, or centers working under GAP Administration, young people in different networks will have the chance to spend time together and this in turn will contribute to the development of a ground for pluralist social life.

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<sup>33</sup> <http://www.ulusalgenclikkonsevi.net>

- **YURTKUR**

Since the day the Ministry of Youth and Sports was established, YURTKUR has been operating as an institution working under the Ministry. It is mainly responsible of two activities: To provide cash scholarships and loans in order to support the education of the students and to meet the needs for housing. As a result of the Turkey's sixty first government's policy of increasing the number of universities in the country, the number of university students is expected to rise in the near future. Thus, this implies that the number of student dormitories and the number of students needing financial support will also increase.

YURTKUR has three main service departments: Department of Loans, Department of Administration and the Management of Dormitories, and YURKUR Regional Directorates. In order to understand in which areas activities of YURTKUR intensifies, the expenditures of those three departments can be examined. As of 2012, 3 billion TL of YURTKUR's total expenditure of 4.8 billion TL is used by the Department of Loans. YURTKUR spends 1 billion TL for scholarships. The expenditures of the Regional Directorates responsible of housing problems are also around 1 billion TL in total. Loans of the Department of Loans which appear to be the highest spending item constitute 45 percent of the total expenditures of YURTKUR (YURTKUR, 2013).

### **Department of Loans**

In 2012, scholarships were provided to 348.904 students. Given that the number of scholarships in 2004 was 55.724, this high level of increase is important. In 2004 522.670 students, in 2009 578.131 students, and in 2012 667.359 students received higher education loans (YURTKUR, 2013). On the other hand, the results of the survey conducted for the Network Project demonstrate that the ratio of young people that have the opportunity to access public loans is only 4.7 percent (KONDA, 2014).

The monthly scholarship/loan provided by the Institution is very low compared to the amount needed by a university student in order to maintain his/her living (Table 10). The monthly scholarship was 280 TL for 2013 and 300 TL for 2014. When we calculate the rate of increase in those figures and take into account the inflation rate, we see that that scholarships and loans increased at the same rate as inflation. However, this amounts are far from covering the monthly expenses of a typical student. If we also take into account regional differences in terms of purchasing power parity between Turkey's provinces/regions, it becomes obvious that those amounts are insufficient especially for students living in metropolitan cities.

**Table 10: Monthly Amount of Scholarships and Loans, Nominal and Adjusted to Inflation, TL**

	Nominal Amounts of Monthly Scholarships/ Loans	Average Annual CPI	Adjusted Level Amount of Monthly Scholarships/Loans
2009	180	6,53	176
2010	200	6,4	192
2011	240	10,45	213
2012	260	6,16	265
2013	280	7,40	276
2014	300		301

**Source:** YURTKUR 2013 Activity Report. [www.yurtkur.gov.tr](http://www.yurtkur.gov.tr), see Appendix 1, Data Sources, no. 6. CPI rates is obtained from Turkish Statistical Institute. [www.tuik.gov.tr/VeriBilgi.do?alt\\_id=17](http://www.tuik.gov.tr/VeriBilgi.do?alt_id=17)

Young men receiving higher education loans enter the labor market late as they have to wait for obligatory military service after graduation and young women having difficulties in repaying their debts as their labor market participation rate is low and as they marry relatively at an early age are among problems that still persist today. If we also take into account the level of youth unemployment, the difficulties young people face in repaying their loans became more clear. The interest rate used in the calculation of total debt of higher education loans is an important point to note in that regard. Two other issues also make the life of young people more difficult: YURTKUR applies an interest rate based on the price changes of durable goods and the inflation rate, while repayment period begins two years after graduation and repayments are independent of the employment statuses of the borrowers.

The abolishment of higher education fees of public universities' daytime programs is a positive step. Yet, if education is a right, than abolishment of fees for evening programs should also be considered. However, university fees are not the only expense item for university students. Students, especially those coming from low income families, also need income to cover their housing, textbook, and daily expenses. The availability of non-refundable scholarships to be used for those expenses is essential. As mentioned above, YURTKUR's total amount of loan expenditures is three times higher than the total amount of scholarships it provides.

### **Regional Directorates of YURTKUR**

The mission of YURTKUR is defined as “with social state based and people oriented approach, to provide scholarship/loan, housing, nutrition services and social, cultural, and sports activities in order to support the education of higher education students and



to contribute to their personal development”.<sup>34</sup> Excluding loans and scholarships, housing and other services listed in the mission can be provided via student dormitories. Thus, housing and other types of additional services offered to students in dormitories are quite important. Table 11 shows the numbers of female and male students staying in YURTKUR dormitories.

**Table 11: Total Amount of Beds in Dormitories**

	Female	Male	Total
2009	132.089	93.024	225.113
2010	146.680	99.840	246.520
2011	159.866	107.180	267.046
2012	187.999	120.001	308.000

Source: YURTKUR 2013 Activity Report. [www.yurtkur.gov.tr](http://www.yurtkur.gov.tr)

According to OSYM figures, in the academic year 2011-2012 there were 3.310.291 - 1.565.983 female and 1.744.308 male- students attending to university or four year higher education institutes. During the same period, YURTKUR was capable of providing housing for 267.046 students. There is no data available on the limited opportunities of housing provided by the universities themselves as well as on the ratio of higher education students living with their families. However, as demonstrated in Table 12, 31,22 percent of university students neither live with their families nor stay in a dormitory.

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<sup>34</sup> [www.kyk.gov.tr](http://www.kyk.gov.tr)

**Table 12 - Relation between university education and housing**

	<b>Whom do you live with? (%)</b>							
<b>Are you a student? At which level?</b>	<b>With my family</b>	<b>With my spouse /partner</b>	<b>With a relative/ acquaintance</b>	<b>With friends</b>	<b>Alone</b>	<b>With my spouse's family</b>	<b>In dormitory</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>High school</b>	96,03	1,19	0,60	0,99	0,60	0,00	0,60	100
<b>University</b>	48,98	0,79	1,36	25,11	3,85	0,11	19,80	100
<b>Master/PhD</b>	63,64	9,09	4,55	13,64	9,09	0,00	0,00	100
<b>Not a student</b>	72,00	20,42	1,28	1,40	3,15	1,63	0,12	100
<b>Higher school graduate, attends university preparation courses</b>	94,23	2,56	0,00	1,92	0,64	0,00	0,64	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>69,95</b>	<b>8,01</b>	<b>1,11</b>	<b>10,11</b>	<b>2,77</b>	<b>0,62</b>	<b>7,43</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: KONDA, 2014

Furthermore, there is a strong link between the housing preferences of university students and the number of years they attended to university. As the students pass to higher grades, the ratio of those living with their friends increase mostly because of the problems students experience in dormitories (Özer and Kurtaran, 2009). Under the light of those facts, it is plausible to state that the amount of beds in YURTKUR dormitories is quite low compared to the total number of students in higher education.

According to an announcement made in YURTKUR's web-site in August 2013, 30 new dormitories with a total capacity to serve 22 thousand students were being constructed in 2013 in cooperation with Housing Development Administration of Turkey and construction of 64 dormitories in 40 provinces with 43.848 beds have been planned to be completed at the end of the whole project. Since the activity report for 2013 has not been published as of today, it is not possible to access the total increase in bed capacities and the exact prices for staying in dormitories. The prices for 2014 is announced to vary between 129 TL and 250 TL.

38,2 percent of 425 young people from different provinces, who participated to a survey conducted in March 2009, were staying in a student house/own house/rented house, while 34,2 percent of them lived with their families. 10,9 percent of the young people on the other hand solved their housing problem by staying in YURTKUR's

dormitories. 67,8 percent of the students stated that they would like to live in a student house/own house/rented house, if they had the opportunity to make a choice (Özer and Kurtaran, 2009).

However, as Özer and Kurtaran's study points out, approximately 40 percent of the university students live in houses shared with other students, while 64,4 percent of students living in YURTKUR dormitories expressed their willingness to live in a student house/own house/rented house, if they had the chance. Limitations implemented on students' entry and exit hours in the existing dormitory system, limitations on students' freedoms, conflicts with dormitory room mates are stated among the reasons for leaving dormitories and living in student houses (Özer and Kurtaran, 2009).

In addition to those figures, we should also note that improving bed capacities and technical conditions alone is not sufficient; conditions that are provided according to different needs and demands of young people, regulations that protect the rights and freedoms of young people, and participatory practices in dormitory administrations are also needed. If we see housing something beyond than staying in a room for a certain period of time and regard it as a living space, the need for improving the conditions provided by YURTKUR becomes more obvious.

On the other hand, while contributing to young people's social and cultural development are among the objectives for the establishment of YURTKUR, the seventh section of its Dormitory Administration and Management Regulation titled Disciplinary Actions has been prepared with an approach that regards young people as potential criminals. The existing regulation should be revised in a way that does not violate the immunity of private life of students, that does not define young people as potential criminals, and that does not prevent young people's individual and collective participation to social and political life.

- **Turkish Employment Agency (İŞKUR)**

As explained before, following the 2008 financial crisis, unemployment in general and youth unemployment in particular have become prominent issues for both the global economy and the Turkish government. The problem of youth unemployment and overall level of employment continues to be one of the main issues in the agenda when talking about policies related to youth due to recent developments. The same also holds for Turkey.

In order to combat with youth unemployment and to provide decent working conditions to young people, International Labor Organization's 2013 report advises to focus on those policies: 1) Implementing employment friendly macro economic policies; 2) Provide education and training opportunities to enhance employability

and facilitate the school-to-work transition; 3) Implement employment policies that target directly youth employment, 4) Allow young people to benefit from entrepreneurship opportunities, 5) Struggle against discrimination to young people in employment (ILO, 2013). The expenditures of İŞKUR is essentially related to second and third policies advised by ILO. In that regard, while İŞKUR placed 26.352 young people in a job in 2009, this number has increased to 147.065 in 2012. 85 percent of the young people placed in a job are primary and secondary school graduates (İŞKUR, 2012). The number of young people benefiting from counseling services of İŞKUR has increased from 2.495 in 2009 to 210.963 in 2012.

Within the framework of Active Labour Force Programs (ALFP) based on annual activity reports of İŞKUR, a significant amount of resources is allocated to courses and training activities organized as a part of various programs and projects like Labor Force Development Courses, Entrepreneurship Trainings, On the Job (Internship) Programs, Public Work Volunteer Programs (TYÇP), Vocational Training Programs for those Working, and Specialized Vocational Training Centers (UMEM). Though the distribution of those programs' participants according to gender can be found at İŞKUR's web-site, information on the distribution according to age does not exist. Journal of Employment published by İŞKUR provide the number of young people benefiting from active labor force policies in its special issue on youth employment ( Table 13).

**Table 13: The Number of Young People Benefiting from Active Labor Force Policies**

Course Type	Men	Women
Vocational Training for those Employed	758	164
Courses for Formerly Convicted Persons	17	0
GAP II	810	1.013
GAP II TYÇP	1.125	155
GAP II/Entrepreneurship	73	35
GAP II/UMEM	381	149
GAP II/UMEM-İEP	219	146
ENTERPRENEURSHIP	2.387	1.470
Courses for Convicted Prisoners	820	35
Labor Force Development Courses / with Employment Guarantee	24.413	28.220
Labor Force Development Courses / General	4.552	6.806
Labor Force Development Courses / TYÇP	27.473	6.964
On the Job Training Programs (İEP)	3.918	4.405

Courses for the Disabled	1.429	908
UMEM Project	12.387	5.407
UMEM Project / İEP	3.975	1.475
Total	84.737	57.352

**Source:** İstihdam Dergisi, no 7, 2012, İŞKUR, Ankara

The figures obtained from İŞKUR indicate a significant increase as of 2009 in the number of individuals participating to the courses organized within ALFP. The reason behind that is the increase in the level of expenditures for active labor force participation programs financed from Unemployment Insurance Fund according to Law No. 5763 which entered into force in 2008. While the number of participants of ALFP courses was 17.106 in 2006, this number has increased to 213.852 in 2009 and to 464.645 in 2012. Those figures can be seen in Table 13 and around 30 percent of the total participants consist of young men and women aged 16-24.

When we examine the applications made for unemployment compensation and the number of those entitled to unemployment compensation, it is seen that in 2012 52.966 young people applied and 23.418 were entitled to compensation (İŞKUR, 2012).

İŞKUR implements various projects by using both national and international resources. While some of those projects are directly targeting young people, there are also those indirectly related to young people like projects for the employment of women which also target young women. In 2012 İŞKUR organized 396 vocational training courses with the participation of 11.432 unemployed persons with the support of the Grant Project on vocational trainings.

A new type of expenditure has been included in the total spending of unemployment insurance fund through the Law No. 5763, also known as the Employment Package. This package intends to promote the employment of young people and women. The law states that for persons older than 18 and younger than 29 and also for all women over 18, in case they fit to the criteria set by the law, their employers' social security contributions will be covered by the Unemployment Insurance Funds for a five year period according to following ratios: 100 percent for year one, 80 percent for year 2, 60 percent for year 3, 40 percent for year 4, and 20 percent for year 5. According to temporary articles seven and ten of the Law on Unemployment Insurance Fund, the insurance contributions paid by the Unemployment Insurance Fund to Social Security Institution have been realized for years 2011 and 2012. In 2011 225 million TL and in 2012 143 million TL were paid by the Unemployment Insurance fund for promoting youth and female employment.

It is also necessary to refer to the activities implemented by İŞKUR that are directly targeting young people. Young people were among the target groups covered in the

Grant Program implemented under Active Employment Measures Components. Under that program, projects for promoting youth employment implemented in 25 provinces in the first year and 45 provinces in the second year had been supported by grants. 101 projects in total were entitled to receive grants. 10.693 individuals consisting of 5.959 men and 4.734 women benefited from those projects (İŞKUR, 2012). Also during the same term, İŞKUR launched a program according to which wages of the young people working as interns in companies, including their insurance contributions, were being paid by the State for six months within the framework of “On the Job Training Programs”. Moreover, other project based activities targeting to boost youth employment also took start during the previous term. Activities held in penal institutions and prisons, activities targeting the families of working children, and those aiming to increase the employment of women can be mentioned as examples of those projects.

In 2011, an employment exposition was organized in 20 different provinces in order to increase young people’s awareness of professions and companies and preparations for organizing career days in other cities took start, leading to such activities in 40 cities. In 2012, the same activities included 27 employment exposition and 102 career days.

As a part of Operation for Promoting Youth Employment (GİG) assistance like internship opportunities provided for young people to facilitate their transition to labor market in 12 NUTS II regions. As a result of this program, which started in 2009, 127 projects had been supported. The second phase of the program, GİD II were launched later on. Within GİD II, preparation for a new operation aiming to increase youth employment has begun. The activities to be carried out under that operation financed jointly by European Commission and Turkey have been designed in accordance with investments to different sectors. The second phase of the Operation for Promoting Youth Employment is planned to continue for 30 months starting from 2013.

Decent Work for Everyone: National Youth Employment Program and Pilot Implementation Program in Antalya financed by Millennium Development Goals Achievement Fund (MGD-F) is an important project on youth employment carried by İŞKUR in cooperation with Food and Agriculture Organization of United Nations (FAO), International Labor Organization (ILO), International Organization for Migration (IOM), and United Nations Development Program. The general objective of the program is to adopt and implement employment policies for the poor and the youth aiming decent work and social integration. While activities targeting youth population and young women in the migrated population in Antalya have been

implemented at the local level, a National Youth Employment Plan based on findings at the local level has been developed at the national level.<sup>35</sup>

At the same time, project based efforts of İŞKUR aiming to increase youth employment has intensively continued. Activities for the employment of young women that had been raised in orphanages were carried out via the Pomegranate Arils Project with the partnership of UN, Ministry of Education, and İŞKUR. Furthermore, in order to create gender awareness among İŞKUR personnel regarding their activities on the employment of women, trainings were organized with İLO which ended in 2010. In addition, as a part of Safe and Secure Life for the Future of Children and Youth Social Protection and Assistance Program (COGEPA), a project to be implemented in 81 provinces aiming to provide social and educational assistance for especially migrated young people and children has started in 2012. 37 provinces was added in 2013 to this program, which was implemented in 17 provinces during 2012 (İŞKUR, 2012).

It is observed that İŞKUR seriously puts effort for the struggle against youth employment which has entered to the government's agenda after 2008 financial crisis. This situation has also been reflected in the public expenditures. However, after the crises, during the years with upward economic trends, the number of activities targeting young people has decreased. While this situation is on the one hand a sign of normalization in terms of macro indicators, when we take into account that youth unemployment is still two times higher than adult unemployment, it becomes obvious that the problem continues to be crucial. Two other indicators can also be mentioned to explain the seriousness of the youth unemployment problem. The first one can be monitored from Turkish Statistical Institute's data. For instance, in 2012, 775.000 of 2.5 million unemployed people in the non agriculture sectors consisted of those between ages 15 and 24. While the number of unemployed people who are able to participate to the trainings of İŞKUR is 465.000, 142.000 of them are aged 15-24.

On the other hand, support provided by İŞKUR to young people for job search and job finding is still insufficient. According to the survey conducted by KONDA for the Network project, young people state that they generally search jobs through their families, friends, relatives, and acquaintances (39,1 percent). Web sites for job search (23 percent) and conventional ways like newspaper advertisements, posters, leaflets (17,1 percent) follow that. The study shows that İŞKUR and vocational training courses whose main objective is to find jobs, career centers in universities, and private employment agencies and career consultancy firms are the least used methods by young people seeking jobs with 8,6 percent, 5,2 percent, and 1,2 percent, respectively. While 71,1 percent of the young people have found their jobs with the help of their

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<sup>35</sup> <http://www.ilo.org/public/turkish/region/eurpro/ankara/areas/uep15kasim2011son.pdf>

immediate social circles, the percentage of those that have found a job through İŞKUR is 3,4 percent (KONDA, 2014).

- **National Agency**

Directorate of the Center for EU Education and Youth Programs (National Agency - NA), which during the term of covered by this report first operated under the Ministry of Development and then under the Ministry of EU, is an institution as important as the MYS in the area of youth policies. During the monitoring period, the name of the institution was changed from Turkish National Agency to the National Agency of Turkey. NAs, which have similar structures in other countries, carry out Lifelong Learning and Youth Programs which aim to promote the mobility of particularly young people throughout EU. In 2014, those programs were combined and they are now called Erasmus + and have a new content. Since the priorities and management principles of the programs are decided at the EU level and since Turkey does not have a member in the European Youth Forum, which is one of the primary institutions EU consult directly on those issues, Turkey does not have a say on the contents of the program although it is among Program countries.

As of 2014 various stakeholders, particularly youth NGOs and young people can benefit from various grants and opportunities provided under Erasmus + Program. However, since during the monitoring term the Program run separate activities for two areas, their performance will also be examined separately in this study.

EUYouth Program has provided financial support in order to promote voluntary work of young people between ages 13-30 as well as short and long term mobility of young people. Erasmus Program implemented under Lifelong Learning Program has supported academics, particularly students, while Comenius has supported children and young people in primary and lower/upper secondary education, Leonardo has supported students, trainers and professionals in the area of vocational training, and Grundvig has supported opportunities for learning from similar institutions, organizations, and persons through EU level mobility of adults including also young adults.



**Table 14: Youth Program, Basic Figures, 2004-2012**

<b>Statistics of National Agency Youth Program</b>					
<b>Year</b>	<b>Number of Application</b>	<b>Number of applications accepted</b>	<b>Total Amount of Allocated Budget (Euro)</b>	<b>Total Number of Participants</b>	<b>Number of Participants from Abroad</b>
<b>2004</b>	327	201	2.571.528 €	4.247	2.130
<b>2005</b>	1.063	367	3.043.779 €	5.093	2.862
<b>2006</b>	1.237	731	4.854.245 €	7.230	3.615
<b>2007</b>	1.334	497	5.826.128 €	7.057	3.814
<b>2008</b>	1.721	550	6.712.576 €	8.865	5.126
<b>2009</b>	3.172	583	7.599.000 €	9.283	5.090
<b>2010*</b>	3.972	669	8.022.618 €	10.194	4.859
<b>2011*</b>	5.612	755	9.868.923 €	12.614	6.548
<b>2012*</b>	7.805	1.059	14.082.613 €	17.312	9.016
<b>Total</b>	<b>26.243</b>	<b>5.412</b>	<b>62.581.410 €</b>	<b>81.895</b>	<b>43.060</b>

**Source:** National Agency Activity Report, 2012

As can be seen in Table 14, there is a huge gap between the demanded and supplied levels of financial support regarding the Youth Program. One reason for that situation might be the youth NGOs' emerging need for carrying out activities in cooperation with youth NGOs in EU countries. On the other hand, one should also take into account that for making an application, a person should possess certain skills. Yet, independent of this situation, the main objective of the Youth Program is to add a European dimension to the existing youth activities at the local and national level. However, the Program and other similar opportunities have become nearly the only source for funding in the area of youth in countries like Turkey, since the available opportunities for young people and youth NGOs are quite limited.

Nevertheless, the figures indicate that only one in every four project application can receive financial support. However, the higher the total funding budget, the higher is the number of projects receiving grants. This implies that the main reason for not meeting the level of demand is the inability to mobilize sufficient level of resources, rather than the lack of necessary skills for project applications.

Allowing young people to benefit from the program in fact creates an important difference in those young people's lives.<sup>36</sup> As stated in an impact study, mobility of young people develops both their individual and social learning; in other words, it has a crucial affect on the learning opportunities outside schools (TOG, 2008).

**Table 15: Lifelong Learning Program, Basic Figures, 2004-2012**

<b>Budget Year</b>	<b>Number of Grant Applications</b>	<b>Number of Applications that Received Grants</b>	<b>Total Amount of Grants (Euro)</b>	<b>Number of Participants Going Abroad</b>
<b>2004</b>	1.517	795	11.272.732	4.698
<b>2005</b>	4.962	1.341	21.820.112	10.084
<b>2006</b>	6.133	1.652	35.999.495	15.062
<b>2007</b>	7.079	1.741	45.836.788	20.614
<b>2008</b>	5.650	1.674	51.158.812	23.639
<b>2009</b>	5.969	1.732	56.117.524	28.403
<b>2010*</b>	7.989	2.102	67.420.976	34.551
<b>2011*</b>	9.666	2.107	72.607.713	39.630
<b>2012*</b>	9.493	2.648	98.856.023	54.535
<b>Total</b>	<b>58.458</b>	<b>15.792</b>	<b>461.090.174</b>	<b>231.216</b>

**Source:** National Agency Activity Report, 2012

A similar analysis also holds for the Lifelong Learning Program. Though its programs do not target only young people but cover them, there are also opportunities supporting European level mobility under Lifelong Learning Program. The figures for both Youth and Lifelong Learning Programs are quite similar. The ratio of number of applications to number of grants is roughly between 1/4 and 1/5 for the Lifelong Learning Program, and the number of projects receiving grants increases as the total amount of financial resources allocated to the Program rises. In other words the number of grants increase proportionally to the amount of funding budget available. However, as demonstrated in the Table 15, the number of applications for the last two years is approximately the same for that Program.

There are also problems related to the inclusion of disadvantaged groups (like disabled young people and young women) which are among the priorities of both programs. One reason for that is the lack of capacity in existing NGOs to accomplish

<sup>36</sup> About the impact of the Youth Programs, see, Youth Program Creates a Difference, [http://www.ua.gov.tr/docs/gençlik-programı/gençlik\\_fark\\_yaratıyor1.pdf?sfvrsn=0](http://www.ua.gov.tr/docs/gençlik-programı/gençlik_fark_yaratıyor1.pdf?sfvrsn=0) ; also see, Youth Program Impact Analysis Report 2007-2009 <http://www.ua.gov.tr/docs/magazine/gençlik-2007-2009-etki-analizi.pdf?sfvrsn=0>

to include those groups in themselves. While its results are not limited with that problem, also the low level of young people speaking a different language restricts young people's access to many international project application calls, including also those of EU's. We can rightfully state that the problem of speaking a foreign language also creates problems for finding partners particularly for the Youth Program. Those problems are in fact related to the structure of the program rather than the way they are managed by NA.<sup>37</sup> In fact cross border mobility of young people hugely enhance their foreign language skills.

Moreover, Eurodesk, which also operated under National Agency, carries out various local activities through its 115 contact points which in cooperation with public and civic organizations aims to enable young people's access to the European level opportunities. In that regard, by allowing young people to access directly to information on opportunities and various programs provided by EU, those offices fill an important gap.

- **Ministry of Development**

During the report's monitoring period, one of the most important developments concerning the Ministry of Development is the affiliation of the National Agency with the Ministry of EU. Apart from that, the Ministry gathers Specialized Commissions on various issues for gathering contributions related to prepared plans as the institution responsible of the preparation and the monitoring of Development Plans. During the preparation period for the 10th Development Plan (2014-2018), a Youth Working Group consisting of public officials, NGOs representatives, and scholars was established and by organizing several meetings, this Group prepared a report on the issues related to the youth policies in Turkey that needs to be included in the overall plan. In addition to that Group, the Ministry also provides services to young people through GAP Administration and Youth Culture Houses and Social Assistance Program which can be accepted as youth activities being carried out under the Ministry.

- GAP Administration and Youth Culture Houses

Development centered approach has been the backbone of youth activities carried out particularly in underdeveloped regions. In that regard, between May 2001 and August 2006, partnership established between Youth for Habitat Association, UNDP, and GAP Administration Social Development Project for Youth a project had been

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<sup>37</sup> Information on the impact of the Lifelong Learning Program is regularly published by the National Agency. For more information, see, <http://www.ua.gov.tr/basin-odasi/yayinlar/raporlar>. Also see, Hasdemir and Çalıkoğlu, 2011.

implemented for opening and operating Youth and Culture houses in Adıyaman, Batman, Diyarbakır, Gaziantep, Kilis, Mardin, Siirt, Şanlıurfa, and Şırnak with the financial support provided by the Swiss government. Culture houses, which had perviously operated with the financial help provided by the private sector, has been continuing its activities through the partnership established with the Development Foundation of Turkey since 2008.

Every Youth and Culture house employs a full time person and a voluntary team established around that full time employee, gathered according to his/her abilities of outreach, supports the activities of the existing structure. In addition to activities like courses, workshops aiming to develop skills have also been organized under those centers. While some of the courses are run by voluntary trainers, thanks to the financial contributions received from other projects, the Youth and Culture houses may also employ trainers appointed through the opportunities provided by other public institutions such as Public Education Centers. Sometimes, associations in which the professional and volunteers of those Youth and Culture Houses may hold separate activities using the Houses' facilities. Moreover, those houses can be used as a channel in order to access to the funds open to the application of NGOs. Moreover, the resources targeting youth provided by the SODES project of the Ministry of Development have also been utilized. Besides those, the Houses also host various activities of relatively large NGOs and establish cooperations at different levels with public institutions. Similarly, they also allow their facilities to be used for the promotional activities of the public institutions that directly provide services to young people like the National Agency. At the same time, they may participate to the Youth Assemblies functioning under City Councils at the local level.

2012 Activity Report of the GAP Administration states that, while in 2009 Youth and Culture Houses reached 45.732 young people, this number fell to 29.000 in 2012. Though it is still uncertain, the number of young people expected to be reached in 2013 is estimated as 40.000 according to the information provided by the Administration.

Obviously, Youth and Culture Houses and the Youth Centers operating under the MYS hold similar activities in some provinces but under different roofs. Though the number of young people reached may fluctuate in time, for the Youth and Culture Houses it is annually roughly between 30.000 and 50.000. Despite the efforts for the improving the capacity of the existing staff in those centers, there are still shortages in terms of human resources and some centers, which having difficulties in finding replacements when their staffs quit their jobs, have to work under-capacity from time to time. Moreover, the conflict of authority between those Houses and the Youth Centers, which more or less work in the same area under the roof of different Ministries, creates a local competition between those institutions, which may disrupt local level activities.

#### - SODES Project

Social Assistance Program (SODES), which has been implemented since 2008 under the Ministry of Development, is a social development program which targets to immediately meet the demands created by problems like migration, poverty, and unemployment in disadvantaged regions in order to strengthen the human capital in those regions as well as to support the social integration processes.

The main targets intended to be accomplished through SODES projects include to increase employability, to promote participation of disadvantaged groups to economic and social life, and to give the children, young people, and women in those regions the chance to express themselves by cultural, artistic, and sports activities.

The program, which was put to implementation in GAP provinces in 2008 under the Social Development component of GAP Action Plan, reached in 2010 to 25 cities including DAP provinces and by including 5 provinces as pilot implementation regions to the program in 2011, the total number of provinces covered by the SODES project increased to 30. Those provinces are Adıyaman, Batman, Diyarbakır, Gaziantep, Kilis, Mardin, Siirt, Şanlıurfa, and Şırnak covered by the Southeast Anatolia Project and Ağrı, Ardahan, Bayburt, Bingöl, Bitlis, Elazığ, Erzincan, Erzurum, Gümüşhane, Iğdır, Hakkari, Kars, Malatya, Muş, Tunceli, and Van covered by the East Anatolia Project. The cities included in the program in 2011 as pilot implementation provinces consist of Adana, Mersin (program based implementation through governors' offices), Osmaniye, Kahramanmaraş, and Hatay (through Development Agencies). SODES comprises of three components including employment, social inclusion, and culture, arts, and sports.

During the term 2008-2012, 5.792 projects were found eligible for funding with a total budget of 674.347.748 TL ([www.sodes.gov.tr](http://www.sodes.gov.tr)). Though the realized level of expenditure for 2013 has not been announced yet, the allocated amount for that year was 210.000.000 TL.

The projects in the program include various activities from providing physical space in line with the needs of a specific group (like women and youth centers), to training programs again targeting specific needs of a particular group. Since youth is one of the target groups of the program, young people and civic and public institutions working on youth issues are able to apply for its available resources. Yet, the figures show that funds are mostly used by public institutions.

#### - Multi-Purpose Community Centers (ÇATOMs)

Though they do not carry out activities directly targeting young people, Multi-Purpose Community Centers (ÇATOM) offer activities for women, including young ones. While 40 centers run women-centered activities, they also put into practice activities in cooperation with Youth and Culture Houses operating under the same

Ministry. However, those activities targeting young people cannot be examined as “youth activities” due to their structure but they can be regarded as activities that “also” provide services for young people.

- **Turkish Airlines and Turkish State Railways**

As it is well known, Turkish State Railways (TCDD) and Turkish Airlines (THY) are companies used frequently by young people, the former operating as a public company while the latter is a public-private partnership. Especially after the airline transportation in Turkey was opened to competition and the monopolistic structure in that sector ended, transportation via airways has become an important option for young people. Particularly after high-speed trains have been put into service, TCDD has started a very positive application by making a 20 percent discount not only for students but for all young people between ages 13-26.<sup>38</sup> After this discount opportunity has been put into effect in July 2010, “Mainline Monthly Subscription Cards for Students” and “Suburban Subscription Cards for Students” were revoked and “Mainline Monthly Subscription Cards for Youth” and “Suburban Subscription Cards for Youth” replaced them.

On the other hand, THY continues to allow the same opportunity for students under 25 years old. However, given that only a small majority of young people between ages 15-25 are actually students and that majority of them do not have a regular income, it is obviously more meaningful to apply discounts for all young people instead of just students.

By providing transportation discounts only for students, local governments also create an environment against young people that are not students and who are already in a disadvantaged position. Moreover, since those types of discounts are applied at the local level, a student’s discount right in one province may not be valid in another one. Therefore, transforming all types of transportation accounts for students to discounts covering all young people and ensuring those discount rights to be valid throughout the country can create very positive outcomes.

## **5. Policy Proposals**

The policy proposals explained below have been developed within the framework of the discussions in the previous sections. In fact our proposals are not limited to those

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<sup>38</sup> <http://www.tcdd.gov.tr/home/detail/?id=877>

included in that paper. Most of the policy proposals in Kurtaran, 2012; Nemutlu and Kurtaran, 2012, and Kurtaran, Nemutlu, and Yentürk 2012 continue to be valid.

As almost all the statistical indicators demonstrate us, compared to other segments in the society, young people in Turkey are in a disadvantaged position. Moreover, among young people who are generally in a disadvantaged position in terms of main policy areas such as unemployment, autonomy, poverty, and migration, the situation of being disadvantaged is more obvious for sub-groups like young women, disabled young people, and young people from minorities. In that regard, policies aiming to develop the welfare and the participation of young people in general and those more disadvantaged groups in particular are needed. In fact, that need is not only an issue for today; as the demographic projections indicate, they will be also needed in the future.

- **From protecting the young people to empowering them**

Modification of the Article 58 of the Constitution would be an important step in that direction. We must emphasize the need for changing this Article which focuses on “protecting the young people” with an approach based on “empowering young people”.

One of the crucial signals of an attitude that recognizes young people as a stakeholder in the society is the significance of the framework of services provided to young people in most of the Council of Europe members parallel to the requirements of a welfare state. That framework in fact is a reflection of two approaches based on “protection” and “empowerment” in daily life practices. The first approach is based on the understanding that as one of the vulnerable groups in the society, young people should be provided the opportunity to benefit from various public services. On the other hand, the second one points out that young people may have an unequal position in the society due to external factors rather than internal ones and that this implies the need for a set of interventions aiming to allow young people to live more equally. In Turkey, empowering young people is an approach generally neglected in the development of policies for young people.

“Empowering young people” describes an approach that targets to enhance the capabilities<sup>39</sup> and competences of young people in order to let them live as autonomous and equal individuals and participate to social life. If such an approach is reflected in Article 58, which is the only article on young people in the constitution, this may ensure the recognition of the rights of young people as autonomous and

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<sup>39</sup> This concept, brought forward by Sen’s studies on the subject, can be summarized as people to have the right to have a dignified and meaningful life, to have access to that right, and to have the capability to make demands (İnsel, 2000).

equal individuals and may prevent youth policies to become an instrument for subsequent governments to shape young people according to their understandings. This will also provide a legal basis that guarantee the existence of an environment which allows young people to make their own decisions.

- **Increasing the quantity and the quality of the data**

Information obtained by the analysis and the evaluation of data related to the outputs of the existing policies is as important as the decision making processes from the development to the implementation of those policies. The analysis of such data may be a tool for both improving the existing policies according to actual needs and to make those processes more participatory.

If we put it in a more concrete way, the main indicators like the date of birth, sex, and the family income level of young people benefiting from services targeting the youth should be kept under record. Moreover, in case such data exists, they should be available to the public in order to improve the opportunities for cooperation between the public and the civic sectors as well as to make sound analysis of existing policies. As a result, it will make it more easier for the civil society to design and implement activities improving and supporting the existing public policies.

When making data accessible to the public, an important point that should be paid attention is to determine what parts of an existing data can be shared with the public and which parts cannot. If we need to underline it, this does not mean sharing private information with the public; it implies making large data sets accessible to the public by ensuring the protection of private information.

This at the minimum will be an important step toward developing a transparent relation between the citizens and the state which is in fact a requirement. However, foreseeing the trends for the future and to establish a minimum standard of efficiency are also as important as that. As it is obvious, there are problems in accessing the relevant data for researches on youth policies and this in turn makes it more difficult to assess the ways for supporting the existing policies. We should also note some important developments in that regard. For example, making the publishing of activity reports obligatory for public institutions and to improve the access to data sets on estimated and realized levels of public expenditures within the Medium Term Financial Plan are developments in that direction. NGOs have also begun to use that opportunities and other available data frequently and have made them an important source of reference in their advocacy work. Though the accessible data has also facilitated the analysis of existing policies in this study, there are also points which remained unclear as making a situation analysis was impossible due to the lack of



relevant data. The only way of preventing such problems is to open larger amounts of data for public use.

- **Opportunities of participation based on equal status**

Inclusion of relevant stakeholders to both the planning and the implementation of a policy is crucial for that policy to meet the existing needs. We should emphasize the importance of ensuring the participation of all relevant stakeholders to youth policies' different phases, including planning, implementation, and evaluation based on information sharing, according to predetermined rules and as equal parties.

Beyond consulting to relevant individuals and stakeholder on issues they are allowed to voice their opinions and allowing participation only according to the limits determined by the authority which designs the process, participation means giving an actor the opportunity to take part in every decision that directly or indirectly affects his/her life. If we describe it according to the well-known ladder of participation, the proposal to move upward is still needed, which beginning from below this includes, i) adult-led activities in which youth has a role but only informed and are not allowed to make a preference (step 4); ii) adult-led activities, in which youth are consulted on the design and implementation of project and programs (step 5); iii) adult-led activities where youth is included in the decision making (step 6); iv) activities initiated and directed by the youth (step 7); and even v) youth initiated activities in which decision making is shared with adults (step 8).

This is a minimum level sine qua non criteria for a democracy to be defined as participatory. Naturally, who is actually participating and who do not have the opportunity to participate due to social inequalities are also crucial. While remaining in the lower parts of the ladder may be interpreted as a natural output of NGOs lack of competence and capacity, it may also indicate the problem of distrust between the state and the NGOs and their unwillingness to work together. In that regard, for a youth policy, it is a prerequisite for stakeholders (depending on the problem those stakeholders can include local governments, central authority, scholars working on youth issues, young people, youth NGOs, university clubs etc.) of a specific youth problem to design the process with the intention of solving the problem and to reflect the needs of the youth with all their differences. In other words, it is impossible that a policy is a youth policy in case the subjects of this policy (young people) cannot participate it. However, this participation will not be just a show (will not remain on lower levels of the ladder behaving young people as mascots or as ornaments), only if a participatory process defined over parties of equal status is designed by taking into account both the necessary legal guarantees and the tools (in fact, youth friendly tools). At that point, we should also note that even the process of defining the tools of participation should be decided with the participation of young people.

If students cannot participate to the administration of schools, if young people benefiting from youth centers' services cannot participate to the management of those centers, if students staying in dormitories cannot participate to the administration of the dormitories, or more broadly if young people cannot participate to the design and implementation of public services that directly affect their lives, this may create problems as those in need of these services do not have the opportunity to express their needs. Moreover, improvements also needed in order to ensure the participation of sub-groups of young people such as disabled young people and young women.

- **Strong Cooperation with NGOs**

Particularly at the central government level, the most important way of ensuring the inclusion of young people depends on the coordination between civil society and the public administration. In fact, if young people and their organizations do not have the opportunity to express their needs in a continuous and easy way, the services of public institutions targeting the youth will remain as activities carried out for young people but also on behalf of the young people.

On the other hand, if the cooperation between the public institutions responsible of youth issues and the civil society organizations remains limited to funding, this may create a power relation between the provider of the funds and the beneficiaries. It is obvious that allowing young people and youth organizations to receive grants from state in order to improve their participation as well as social justice and welfare should be an opportunity recognized as a right according to the modern definition of a social state. Yet it is also important to prevent the emergence of an unequal relationship through cooperation, to create an environment in which NGOs can willingly participate by bringing forward methods to solve what they see as their problems, to establish in that regard objective conditions that are announced transparently to the public, and even to use participatory processes in deciding those conditions.

One way of establishing such a strong cooperation with youth NGOs can be the existence of an autonomous National Youth Council which is supported by the state yet founded and led by the civil society. MYS can provide both financial and informational support for the development of a systematic operational structure for such a body, which can function as an association according to the existing legislation. Following that, the financial support for ensuring the sustainability of that body can be achieved by allowing this Council operating as an association to benefit from grants provided via "Youth Projects Support Program". Using such a method on the one hand by using the existing legal framework and opportunities will prevent the emergence of a new bureaucratic process and will become an important step for the cooperation between the state and the youth NGOs on the other

- **Increasing cooperation between institutions**

As we briefly explained above, in Turkey, there are both public institutions which carry out activities that directly or indirectly affect young people and a large population whose needs become increasingly different. Moreover, both the associations founded by young people and other NGOs carry out various activities at the field. Furthermore, the political authority has also put the issue of diversifying the services for the youth in its agenda. As a natural result of that situation, both at the level of public institutions that emerge as important targets of those activities and at the level of institutions other than those, the diversity and the depth of services provided directly and indirectly to the young people and youth organizations appear to be enhanced.

Therefore, the legal framework in Turkey has to be modified once again in order to accomplish that. In that case, though after the establishment of MYS, the Ministry has become the primary address for coordination between public bodies working on youth issues, there are also changes needed to accomplish such a coordination. For example, an exchange of ideas between Turkish State Railways which implements a discount policy for the youth and Turkish Airlines on the services provided to the young people can create an important value added. In order to realize that value added, MYS has a legitimate status among public institutions. Moreover, the MYS as a result of its responsibilities has also has put in its agenda to ensure more frequent and regular communication between those types of public institutions.

Furthermore, when body like MYS which has emerged in the area of youth suddenly and with a serious level of staff cannot establish links and parallel functioning between public institutions working on youth issues, it may sometimes even create an environment of competition among institutions working on similar topics. Youth Centers in Turkey are the best examples of such a problem. As much as we know, MYS intends to increase the number of existing youth centers. Since in the current situation NGOs, local governments, and the GAP Administration also have youth centers, sometimes in some provinces there can be more than one youth center working for the same target group. This, on the one hand is an important opportunity. In fact, there is a need for more comprehensive and higher number of services needed for a social group constituting a large population with diversified needs. However, this situation which may lead to an increase and diversification in services can also become a disadvantage if services provided by different centers are not coordinated. Establishing coordination between those institutions not only at the central government level but also at the local level will enhance both their productivity and the diversification of public services according to the needs of young people.

- **More accountability and transparency**

Recent developments in the area of youth has led to both an increase in the number of opportunities available to young people and youth NGOs and to the provision of new opportunities in that field. Those new practices create new demands in the field and a new dynamism can be observed among young people with whom MYS can establish relations. If we add those the already available youth programs of the NA and SODES, we can talk about a large group of beneficiaries.

Young people and youth NGOs have to pass through some selection processes in order to be eligible for benefiting from those opportunities. For example, a youth organization has to undergo a selection process for grants. Similarly, the applications of young people for participating the youth camps are also subject to a selection process. It is crucial to have a transparent framework for those selection procedures.

In that respect announcing of objective and transparent selection criteria and informing the public about how and by whom those processes are administered through channels open to everyone are important. Moreover, when the selection criteria is being decided, if the inputs of institutions and individuals working at the field level on youth issues is received and those processes are designed together with them, this will make civil society an integral part of the whole process. A participatory process built in that way would motivate NGOs to create an ownership of the process, to advocate it at the local level, and to convey those programs to a larger population through communication. This in turn would extend the comprehensiveness of those opportunities

- **Mainstreaming gender issues in the area of youth**

The existing problems related to gender inequalities can also be found among young people. Efforts for ensuring the participation of young women and to increase their access to public services related to basic indicators on labor force participation and access to youth centers and to the implementation of youth policies. Investment on youth in that area is important for creating a more gender-equal society in Turkey.

In that respect, specific policies aiming to increase the participation of young women must be embedded to all issues debated under the concept of youth participation. The method for this objective may vary depending on the issue at hand. For example, in some areas related to the empowerment of young women, creating environments by excluding men can allow young women to express themselves more comfortably and as a result to define directly what is right for them. Also of equal importance is providing opportunities for young women living in male-dominated societies to experience the tools for survival in life at an early age and to put into practice activities aiming to make young people to learn from each other. For both objectives, the focus must be to make efforts for changing the approach from a women rights

approach based on the protection of women to an understanding based on perceiving women as equal citizens in the society which have different needs.

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